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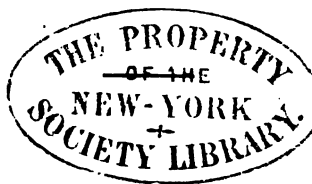
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THE
BEAUTIFUL SC

BY

FLORENCE MARRYAT

Author of "Parson Jones," "Fighting the
— "Her Father's Name," "A Fatal Silen
"There is No Death," "The Nobler Sex,"
"How Like a Woman," etc.



NEW YORK

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CONTENTS.

Part the First—Spring.

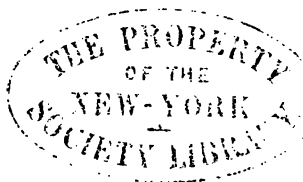
CHAPTER	PAGE
I. THE ACCIDENT,	I
II. THE OPERATION,	23
III. THE AVOWAL,	45
IV. THE CONTRACT,	66

Part the Second—Summer.

V. THE ENGAGEMENT,	90
VI. THE PICNIC,	112
VII. THE ATTRACTION,	135
VIII. THE DISCOVERY,	158

Part the Third—Winter.

IX. THE SACRIFICE,	182
X. THE REJECTION,	202
XI. THE DISAPPEARANCE,	224
XII. THE SALVATION,	247



THE BEAUTIFUL SOUL.

Part the First.—Spring.

CHAPTER I.

THE ACCIDENT.

[T was not quite fair of Miss Hetherington's female friends to call her ugly,—no face can be really ugly that bears the impress of an unselfish and generous soul,—but at the same time no one could have said she was handsome. Her gray eyes were small, though set wide apart in a broad, low forehead; her nose was heavy; her mouth large; her hair in no abundant quantity and of an ordinary brown.

But in compensation for these personal disadvantages she possessed a fair and delicate complexion, a set of wholesome white teeth, and a tall and graceful figure. And you must add to these a heavenly expression. Felicia Hetherington's smile was "sweetness, long drawn out." When you had once seen it in its completeness, it haunted you. It was her soul that shone through her

early age, she had been brought up by attendants and schoolmistresses under the supervision of her grandfather, who considered he had done his whole duty toward her by dying and leaving her his property.

At twenty-one Felicia Hethe had found herself the possessor of a town house and a country house, and an income of five thousand a year. She was not a near relation in the world, and was very lonely then and she was very lonely now.

She had had plenty of suitors, but withstanding her plain features, she had been unable to bring herself to take an interest in any one of them. At thirty-five years of age, she was still unmarried and likely to remain so. When she first, she is leaning out of her carriage, driving up and down the street in the height of the London season, she looks looking infinitely bored. No man or thing did not suit her taste, and she would much rather have

was part of her duty to show herself in town during the season.

But Miss Hetherington hated the ordeal. She felt more lonely and unloved in a crowd than when she lived in solitary state at Cheshunt. That was the secret of her unhappiness, though she was too unselfish to let her private feelings obtrude themselves for the annoyance of her friends.

Felicia Hetherington had no one to love her! She was necessary to the happiness of no one—nobody held her first in their thoughts and wishes. Of course, with such a fortune, she had plenty of, what the world calls, friends. She could have filled either of her houses at a moment's warning. When she issued cards for an evening's amusement, her rooms were crowded with an eager mob, all pushing their way to her supper tables and vying with each other to empty her dishes of lobster salad and bottles of champagne. Did she ask any one of them down to Cheshunt for a visit, she found they enjoyed themselves so much that it was with difficulty she got rid of their company again; but such association did not satisfy her yearning for companionship—such a different thing from company; no one of her acquaintances gave her their real confidence; she owned none of their hearts; she was nothing in their lives but a hostess.

world who spoke
her old chum and
Cuthbert, also an
about her own age,
far less than she w
on account of Mi
Wales and having
look after and atte

Her loneliness
usual on Miss I
chiefly perhaps bec
fine and she pineo
and shady woods
people who saw on
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marry if she electe
all women with a
can, most of her
periled their immo

THE ACCIDENT.

self alone. As she thought of all this on this bright May day, she sighed heavily.

It was nothing to her that the cushions she lay back on were of sat damask, and that the united wages of the two servants on the box of her carriage would have kept many a family comfortable.

She gazed out on the panorama of Folly and Fashion which was passing in review before her, and felt sick of the degradation to which her sex can lower itself in the cause of Mammon.

Painted-up old dowagers, with the hair glistening like brass candlesticks, the rays of the summer sun, and the lined and withered cheek ruddled with rouge and pearl-powder; young women whose faces needed no such aids from Art,—Heaven save the mark!—with the natural expression of them stamped out by the same means, and both arrayed in whatever monstrosity Fashion demanded of them, and with all the souls—such as they were—sunk in the dress and their cosmetics.

There they went, a long procession of fools, their carriages crawling after each other, while they criticised the passer-by through eye-glasses of which they had no actual need.

All at once the sickening futility and degradation of the whole conceit seemed to strike Felicia forcibly, and

and the coach
into Park Lane
house in Norfolk
reached about
dead stop.

"What is the
mistress, putting
carriage window

"A block, my
man, who had
there's a haccid

"An accide
whose kind hea
sympathize with
nate. "Is it a c
been run over?"

"I think it's
please, ma'am.

there, against the
very badly hurt, i
the policeman co

"Open the door

dust ; his head bowed upon his chest ; his dress torn and soiled. One constable was supporting him as well as he was able, when another came up.

"Fetch a stretcher, as quick as you can," said the first to the second. "Here's a case for the hospital, if he aint gone already."

"Looks like it," remarked the other. "How did it happen, Bill ?"

"Trying to cross atween a 'bus and a wagon. I've got their numbers ; but 'twas all his own fault. He's bin a bit too sharp this time."

"If he's alive, he won't live to reach St. George's," said his comrade.

Felicia edged her way up to their side.

"My carriage is close at hand," she exclaimed ; "pray make use of it to take the poor man to the hospital, constable. It may be life or death for him if you wait for a stretcher."

"Why, certainly, ma'am, so it may," replied number one, "but I'm afraid he'll sile your cushions."

"Oh, never mind the cushions," cried Felicia, with her usual unselfishness, "only be very careful how you lift him in. Is his leg broken, poor fellow ?"

"Don't know, ma'am. I think he's pretty well smashed up altogether. The 'bus was right atop of him."

The tears came into her kind eyes as she heard the low moan which issued

to the disgust of Edward, pressed by half-closed eyes and lip, he was laid bleeding and dead on the satin cushions. One of the stable boys got in with him, and Hetherington took a seat at the head of the carriage.

The journey to the hospital had been made at a foot's pace, and Felicia had ample time to scan the features of the unfortunate man who had been so unexpectedly cast upon her care. She saw that his pale face, begrimed with dirt and blood, was that of a young man, and that his torn clothes were those of a gentleman, or a man in the position of one.

Who was he? she wondered, and looked at the handsome classic features and the long lithe limbs of the young stranger. Had he a mother and sisters? and how terribly alarmed would be to hear of his sad end.

"Is he gone?" exclaimed Miss Hetherington, who had followed the little procession into the room. "How far is he injured, doctor?"

The assistant surgeon turned as she spoke and asked her if she was any relation of the injured man.

"Oh, no! I never saw him before; but I happened to be on the spot when the accident occurred, and so I brought him here in my carriage. But I hope he will recover, poor fellow!"

"It is impossible to say until he has been properly examined; but I am afraid there is little hope of him," replied the surgeon, as he gave orders for the young man to be carried up to the accident ward.

Miss Hetherington approached him with her purse in her hand.

"If there is any comfort he may have, that I might pay for, doctor," she commenced, but he waved her aside.

"He will receive every attention here, madam," he replied, "and the patients are not permitted to have anything more than the hospital provides for them—at all events at first. By and by, perhaps, should he survive."

"I beg your pardon," she said, with a vivid blush, as she hurriedly put away her purse, "but he appears to be a gentleman, and I have more than I require for myself."

timidly : " Can I
Will it be allowed
inquire ? "

" Certainly, ma
days you will be
patient in whom y
when they are de
their friends. God

And with that he
suit of his duty, and
returned to her car
to her house in Nor

She could not, ho
the idea of the unf
from her mind, and
saw her friend, Mr

him the whole histor

Felicia Hethering
woman. With the
Cuthbert, of whom
Mr. Selwyn, a tall,
sixty years of age, an

ities was

young daughter, Mabel ; chiefly because it pleased her father to see her noticed, and partly because the girl was a ray of sunshine in the house in Norfolk Street, which was gloomy enough in itself.

But Felicia's interest in Mr. Selwyn's friendship arose purely from the pleasure she derived from hearing him talk on scientific subjects, and helping him, by means of her money, to bring some of his discoveries to perfection. She was always weighed down by the thought of the responsibility laid upon her by reason of her wealth, and the necessity of sharing it with her fellow-creatures. She had given up all hope of bestowing it on one only. Fate and her personal disadvantages were against her, she used to say sadly, and she could never be so selfish as to spend it all on herself. And she had a strong, inquiring mind, that could understand and be interested in Mr. Selwyn's discoveries, fancied or otherwise, and thought it would benefit the whole world by helping him. This was the sole basis of her intimacy with the old scientist, who used to stroll into her drawing room most evenings after dinner, and was always welcomed as a relief to her loneliness.

On the day following the accident Felicia was naturally full of nothing else. It is enough to upset most women to witness such a thing, though she was not unused to horrors in the country,

a gentleman. With
anxiety his people
was no card in his
cation of who he
looked for that they
die there and no one
Does it not seem so

"Very sad, although
Mr. Selwyn; "but
are sure, sooner or
clew to his identity
in London, they are
find him missing,
the hospitals. At
so."

"But if he should
London, Mr. Selwyn
come up from the
to try ~~and~~ make
may die in the hospital
and be buried like
shocking to counter

very much interested in him ! He is not a common man, I am sure of that ! And he seems to have been thrown on my care in a way. He may lose the appointment by which he lives by lying in St. George's. I shall feel bound to see that he starts fresh in life. I am sure I could not find a better subject for my assistance."

"I am sure the young man, whoever he may be, could not have found a better friend, Miss. Hetherington. If he survives his accident I shall consider him a very lucky fellow. But come now, let us try to think of something more cheerful. I have a little surprise to communicate to you, in which I hope you will take an interest. Mab has completed a short tale, which has been accepted by the *Suburban Magazine*. What do you think of that ?"

"Mab has written a story and it has been accepted !" cried Felicia Hetherington. "Oh ! I am very glad, and I congratulate you, Mr. Selwyn. I know how anxious you have been that dear Mab should be able to render herself self-supporting. But this success has come sooner than you expected."

"Yes !" said the other, with a sigh, "it has been a little secret between Mab and me for some time past ; but we decided not to tell any of our friends about it, not even you, dear Miss Hetherington, until we felt that the dear child

proved to have no taste for literature, she would have been compelled into the Post Office or become a telegraph clerk. But I think this little success has settled the matter, and Miss Selwyn will persevere steadily with her writing, and she has gained a certain position for herself."

"And she is sure to gain it!"

Miss Hetherington heartily; "and she will have such opportunities of help and encouragement by your influence and large connections. You have what no money can buy. You have Selwyn—a host of friends among editors and publishers in the world. It would have been strange if your daughter had elected to do anything but an author. I only wish she had more talent," she continued with a sigh. "It is so stupid to be able to do nothing but ride and drive."

"But you have no need of doing that,"

Miss Hetherington.

author under any circumstances, perhaps it is just as well ; but you must tell me the name of Mab's story, that I may get it as soon as it comes out."

"It is called 'A Weird Wedding,'" replied the old man, "and it is really remarkably well written for so young a girl, for Mab will not be nineteen till her next birthday, remember. Indeed, I can't think where she learned some of her ideas. They are so much beyond her years."

"Ah ! my dear friend, while people like you and me are dreaming over the past, the young ones are growing up so fast that we are astonished to find that they know as much, or more than ourselves. And I always thought your dear Mab was very bright and witty. I am not at all surprised, for one, that she has turned out a genius. Tell her, from me, that she has my heartfelt congratulations, and if she will come round and lunch with me to-morrow, she shall have them in person. Perhaps she would like to share my afternoon drive, and we will go together to inquire after the poor young man at the hospital."

"Ah ! that will suit Mab exactly. She dearly loves a bit of romance, and will get all the particulars of the accident out of you and weave a new story from them."

"Very good. Tell her to come to me and I will be her next inspiration. Now,

spent the afternoon together. Selwyn was a very showy-looking and as different to her sober friend as it was possible to be. People thought and said that it was impolitic of Felicia Hetherington about with so young and pretty a companion as Miss Selwyn, and had been made after the fashion of certain women she would have seen the policy of the proceeding for. But it never entered her simple head that this bright, handsome, and advanced-thinking girl was a distaste for her maturer years, and made something that was unattractive about herself more apparent than it needed been.

To win the favor of anyone by magnifying the effect of her own person or manners by contrast with something less pleasant, was unknown to Felicia Hetherington. She saw that Miss Selwyn was pleasing to look at and to listen to, and that was the very

considered it her duty to do unto as she would be done by ; which meant, in her creed, that Mab Selwyn had the free run of the house in Norfolk Street and the use of every luxury which her friend enjoyed.

She was not a lovely nor a very lovable girl, but she was fatally attractive to the other sex ; nor was Miss Selwyn ever happy unless she had a man to attract.

Reared without a mother's care, and by a father who thought more of his studies than of his daughter, Mab had grown up in her own fashion, reading her own choice of books and forming her own ideas, without taking the advice or asking the assistance of anyone. By this means she had imbibed many notions which, if they had placed her on her feet in the literary world, at a time when most young authors are only feeling their way, had also filled her mind with a great many ideas unfitted for so young a woman.

As for Felicia Hetherington, for all her thirty-five years, she was a baby compared to this young friend of hers, whose red-golden hair already owed the richness of its hues to Art, and whose big eyes were not unacquainted with the use of belladonna.

But of these things Miss Hetherington was in utter ignorance. The two ladies drove together in the afternoon to

had smashed his right ankle
severe injuries to his head
and was still unconscious and
fever. The doctors would say
for certain, but evidently had
hopes of him.

"And have no discoveries be
to tell who he is, or to whom
longs?" asked Felicia of the nurse
gave them the information.

"None whatever," was the
"there's no marks on his linen
initials, nor nothing in his pocket."

"How sad!" she said, her knees
filling with tears. "He may come
without a friend near his bedside
seems an extraordinary thing
absence should not have been remarked."

"Perhaps he has no relatives
known—we have many such cases
plied the nurse; "but if he dies
probably be without recovery."

poor young fellow want for any comfort that money can procure."

"It is very good of you, madam, I am sure," said the nurse, who was duly impressed by the magnificance of Miss Hetherington's equipage and its appointments.

Felicia and Mab talked of almost nothing but the mysterious stranger and his misfortunes for the rest of the drive ; and from that day Miss Hetherington sent a messenger regularly to ascertain how he was going on. For some time there was no difference. Then came a return of consciousness, and the fear regarding the brain was relieved. His whole condition, however, was so critical that the surgeons could not operate on the ankle, and the spine had received such a concussion that the patient could not be moved in bed.

He had given the doctors his name as Nasmyth, but said he had no friends in London and belonged to no regular profession. He was one of those unhappy waifs of society, then, who are entirely dependent on themselves for their living. This fact, instead of repelling, increased Felicia's interest in him, and as soon as the authorities permitted her to do so, she commenced to send him little presents of flowers and books, with kindly messages. And one day there came a note to tell him that he must not be unhappy or ill at ease about the

who would help him on his way as he should be able to take the burden of life again.

These messages and presents amazed Archibald Nasmyth, they might, considering that he had never taken the slightest interest before, and as he was well able to notice them he became very anxious to learn who it was who showed him so much kindness.

"Who is it that sends me the flowers and kind messages, I inquired; "and who is 'F. Fenton,' who signed this letter?"

"Oh, that's the lady who took me here in her carriage the day after with your accident," was the answer received. "She is a very nice woman, I should say, to judge by her carriage, her horses, with her servants and their top liveries. She ain't particularly beautiful but she seems to think a deal more of the same. I thought she was known to you before, or be

know a lady in London, and few people would take so much trouble about a perfect stranger."

"Oh, I don't know about that!" responded the nurse, who was rather taken by the good looks of her charge, and disposed to be jealous of Miss Hetherington's attention to him: "it's better to be born lucky than rich, they say, and these city ladies are apt to take their little fancies. They tell me that, when she brought you here, her carriage cushions, which is made of gray satin damask, was all stained and dirty with the blood and the mud off your clothes; but when someone remarked what a pity to see 'em ruined in that way, this Miss Hetherington says, 'Oh, what does it matter? I can think only of the poor young man.' That's what comes of being a decent-looking fellow. I bet if you'd had a turned-up nose and red hair you might have whistled afore any fine ladies would have driven here with a couple of 'orses to ask how you was! You would 'ave been left to me and the doctors then, take my word for it!"

The sick man smiled faintly. Notwithstanding his poverty and insignificance, it was evident he had not been allowed to remain in ignorance of the fact that he was an unusually handsome specimen of the human race. Added to which, he knew it for himself and

shall ever see this lady and be able to thank her for myself."

"Oh, I dare say you will, if you do what you're told and get well," replied the nurse rather testily, "but she ain't worth shakes to look at, and you may take my word for that. She's a plain bodied woman, my thinking, without no style about her, and going on for middle age, so you'd better not raise your 'opes too high."

"What hopes should I have?" said Mr. Nasmyth, "except to thank her for these beautiful flowers, and to tell how grateful I am for all her kindness to me?"

"Well, you've talked enough for the present, sir, so just turn your face from the light, please, and go to sleep, or I shall 'ave the doctor after us. I should the lady will be here as soon as ever we gives 'er leave to see you; that won't be till you're a deal stronger than you are at present. So you do take this drop of beef tea like a good gen-

his grasp and threw them on an adjacent table.

"The most unwholesomest things as a hinvalid can smell to," she ejaculated, with a vicious look on her face, as the lovely flowers fell in a little heap on the hospital floor.

CHAPTER II.

THE OPERATION.

MISS HETHERINGTON'S interest in and kindness to Archibald Nasmyth did not arise from any absurd feelings of romance, nor even from curiosity.

It was her natural instinct to succor the helpless and the suffering. There was not a case of sickness or necessity at Cheshunt that she did not personally relieve, and often personally attend. Mothers in fear for the welfare of their offspring always sent for Miss Hetherington, in order to ask for her advice, and on the first symptoms of pain in themselves, they invariably cried out for the same kind friend, who, they knew by long experience, would come to their assistance, if not "with healing in her wings," at least with comfort in her hands, and kind words of sympathy on her lips.

from his body, Felicia Hetherington him carried into the Hall and one of the best beds there, summoned her own doctor and nursed into convalescence herself.

She thought nothing of such things. They came to her as the natural result of her love toward her neighbor. She little knew how she was known among her servants and far and near for her benevolence. She was known to sit up with a scald fever whose mother was in bed with a born brother, for nights together to defray the entire expenses of the family, to mend broken arms, and restore eyesight as to her numerous *protégés*. Her nickname was "the poor man's friend" and there was not a man within miles of Cheshunt who would have gone through fire to serve Miss Hetherington.

It seemed only the natural thing for her to do, therefore, to look

cottage of one of her own laborers at Cheshunt.

Archibald Nasmyth was looking out for her appearance with eager eyes. He had not yet left his bed, on account of his smashed ankle, but he was propped up into a sitting position by pillows, and presented a very uncommon appearance. Always thin, refined, and almost delicate-looking, he now seemed almost etherealized, with his transparent complexion and marble-white hands and face.

His beauty was of that order which gains, rather than loses, by the refining process of sickness. His light brown hair, which it had not been considered necessary to cut off during his illness, was thrown back from a high, though rather narrow forehead. His face, with the exception of a soft, waving mustache, was clean shorn. His mouth was small, with a short, curved upper lip, and his eyes, the most striking feature in his face, were long in shape, sleepy in expression, and the deepest blue in color.

In fact, Mr. Nasmyth was one of those rare individuals whom all the world called very handsome. His age appeared to be about five-and-twenty; but his was a face that would have looked interesting at any age.

Felicia Hetherington was not blind to all this, as she approached his bedside. She saw, or fancied she saw, a gleam of

spasm of pain, and she took
hand in hers with one of
sweetest smiles.

"I am so glad that you are
well enough to see me, Mr. N
she commenced. "I have bee
for this moment, in order to
can be of any further use to y

"And I have been longing fo
he replied, in a rich, low voice
may try, if it is possible, to
benefactress for all she has do
already."

"Indeed it is nothing ! No
have acted otherwise who w
in the same circumstances.
must have felt for a fellow-cre
had sustained such a great m
But you are really getting on
you not? You will soon be c
hospital and be able to retu
care of your friends."

This she said in order to f
the young man had any friend
to But he did not seem to

a great deal over it. Otherwise, I am almost myself again. I am longing to get well, as you may imagine. Everything depends upon it."

"A great deal does, I have no doubt," said Felicia; "but you must not allow that thought to disturb you, Mr. Nasmyth, or you will retard your recovery. Will you let me treat you as a friend?" she added winningly.

"You have been the best friend I ever had," murmured the young man; "indeed, I may say my only friend. There is nothing that I could find it in my heart to refuse you."

"Well, then, if that is the case, give me your confidence. I can see, of course, that you are a gentleman, but they tell me there was no clew found on your person to your identity. Doubtless you have many friends who are most anxious about your welfare, who are perhaps suffering agonies of suspense on your account. Can I not write to them, or go to them, and tell them that so far you are safe and doing well?"

"And what if I should tell you, Miss Hetherington, that I have no friends?"

"I can hardly believe that."

"It is true, nevertheless—in London, that is to say. How long have I been in this place?"

"Three weeks yesterday."

"Three weeks! Ah! then perhaps

Miss Hetherington. My mother not been accustomed to hear from more than once a month, when I sent my little contribution to her tenance. Ah!" said the young man throwing himself back upon his hands with a deep sigh, "when shall I be able to go back to work again and make up for lost time?"

"Mr. Nasmyth," said Felicia with a slight increase of color, "don't let your thought distress you. Let me be your banker. Take it from me as a loan that is to be repaid at your own convenience. Tell me where the remittance is to be sent and I will see it patched at once."

He raised himself on his pillow and gazed earnestly into her honest face.

"Are you an angel, or are you a woman?" he asked. "What

dear young friend," she answered, "who, from no fault of his own, is debarred for a while from continuing to make his way in the world. I am a lonely woman, with far more money than I know how to spend on myself. Is there anything so strange in the fact that I should offer to share it with you? I have done as much and more for a workingman on my own estate; pray do not debar me from the pleasure of helping you in this extremity. I see you are a gentleman and I will not hurt your feelings by the offer of a gift; take it as a loan. Let me act for you till you can act for yourself. Will you?"

Archibald Nasmyth had closed his eyes while she was speaking to him, and she could see the tears stealing through his eyelids. He was evidently too weak yet to stand any emotion.

"I will tell you everything," he said in a broken voice. "You know my name. I am a journalist and an author in a small way, but not attached to any particular paper at present. My father is dead and my mother is paralyzed, and has lived with her own people ever since she lost her husband. I am therefore quite alone in the world and dependent on myself for a living. I have been used to send my mother a small sum monthly; sometimes two or three pounds, —sometimes less, as I could or could not afford it,—and I have not, as a rule, had

e, Kelso, and write and make as
my accident as you can, you wi
under an infinite obligation to
I will repay you—I hope you
t—as soon as ever I can earn
ney.”

‘It is you who place me und
igation by letting me be of some
to you,” said Felicia, “and I
ite to your mother by to-day’s
ow was it that you managed to
h this accident? Have you an
mbrance of it?”

‘I can remember my feelings or
orning perfectly, Miss Hethering
olied Archibald Nasmyth, with
terness. “It was an unusually
e for the time of year, and as I w
o Park Lane I turned very faint
; I suppose, to the fact that I ha
d a dinner for two or three days-
“What?” cried Miss Hetherin
accents of horror. She could
lieve her ears. She had withn
enty of sickness and suffering

"You would not say so, Miss Hetherington, if you knew more of the inner life of London. There are plenty of struggling young artists here, who hardly know what it is to have a regular dinner in the course of a week. There was nothing wonderful to me in that, only the sudden heat made me feel weaker than usual, and, as I was crossing the road rather hurriedly, I stumbled, and the 'bus could not pull up in time. It was really nobody's fault but my own; I should have been more careful. But indeed you must not cry about it," he went on, seeing that Felicia could not restrain her emotion, "it is not worth a tear from you, dear Miss Hetherington! And whatever I may have suffered the goodness you have shown me since is sufficient to blot it out. I shall never forget this episode in my life—never, so long as I live."

But at this juncture the nurse bustled up to say the visiting hour was drawing to a close, and she could not let her patient be excited any further.

"All this talking is very bad indeed for Mr. Nasmyth, madam," she said rather tartly to Felicia, "and I don't know what the doctor will say when he comes his rounds and finds he 'as been a-talking 'imself into a fever again. We shall 'ave to forbid his receiving visitors next Thursday, if any 'arm comes of this."



ing to see me."

"Well, I must certainly go now, I Nasmyth," said Felicia, as she arose : held out her hand to him.

He pressed it fervently.

"God bless you, my good, kind frier I shall lie here and think of your sw looks and words, and dream of how shall try and repay them when I free of this place again."

"Meanwhile, make yourself e about everything, Mr. Nasmyth. you have to do, remember, is to get w and leave the rest to me."

With one of her heavenly smiles his encouragement she was gone, w he gazed after her retreating form a it had been that of an angel.

On the next visiting day, and next after that, she came again, w fruit and flowers and papers and ma zines in her hands, and better than th all, kind words of encouragement : promises of help in the future.] Archibald Nasmyth did not seem

geon, who had been in charge of the case, came to his bedside, accompanied by two more doctors, who made a minute examination of the injured leg, after which they consulted together, and approached the patient's side again.

"Mr. Nasmyth," said one, as spokesman for the rest, "we are sorry to inform you that it will be necessary for us to remove your leg. All that is possible has been done with a view to saving it, but the symptoms are not favorable, and there is no other course open but amputation." The young man grew very pale at this news, but received it in silence. "Of course, you understand, Mr. Nasmyth, that it is within your power to refuse to be operated on, but in that case you will not live. The sooner the operation takes place, also, the better ; so that we shall not defer it beyond to-morrow. Have you any friends whom you would like to be present with you during the time ?"

Archibald Nasmyth looked in the speaker's face.

"You mean," he said, "that I am not likely to survive it ?"

"I mean, undoubtedly, that like all operations it is attended by a certain risk, which in your case is heightened by extreme weakness. If you would like to have a friend with you during the proceeding, therefore, we shall not refuse you."

said the surgeon kindly ; " you have the benefit of every attentive every skill, but I think it right in you, that any operation would, in case, be attended with more risk if you were strong. Come, surely is someone who is sufficiently interested in you to wish to afford you a comfort under this trial."

" I don't know of one, then," answered Nasmyth ; but then brightening a little, he added, " Unless, indeed, Hetherington would come to me—it is no sight for a lady."

" Not unless she has strong nerves," said the doctor ; " however, if you wish to see your friend, I will give orders that she be admitted."

" Yes, I should like to see her whatever happens," replied the other, and a note to that effect was dispatched to Felicia Hetherington.

When she read of the young man's anger she was terribly upset. She had no idea of such a thing, nor that

fort to the poor, lonely lad to feel that she was present while he underwent the trial in store for him, what were her puny feelings in comparison to his? And she had never dreamed of there being any danger in his case : she had never tried to lead his thoughts to anything higher than his personal comfort. What guilt might not lie on her soul if he went out of the world and she had neglected the opportunity which had been placed in her hands !

Taking advantage of the surgeon's permission she flew to the hospital at once, and there a very grave and earnest conversation took place between the two friends—a conversation which left Archibald Nasmyth's mind quite at ease concerning the future of his mother in the event of his being taken from her.

Felicia felt in those moments as if she were communing with a dear younger brother, and striving to sooth his last moments by promises of her fidelity to his wishes ; and Archibald Nasmyth felt indeed that a friend had been raised up for him in his extremity, as he lay with his hand in hers, and heard her gentle voice speak to him of the world beyond, which is so near to all of us, and where he would find a better Protector and Father and Friend than this earth could ever afford him.

The next morning he was removed

Miss Hetherington had given orders that you are to be treated as a private patient," was the reply, "and you will be operated on here instead of in the theatre."

"How good she is to me!" he sighed. "I was dreading the publicity almost more than the operation."

When the surgeons assembled at noon she was there also, ready to do exactly as she was directed. Archibald Nairn, stretched on the operating bed, looking more ghastly than he had ever done with apprehension, was gazing at her, as if she held the fiat of life and death in her hands.

"Is the sight likely to overcome you?" demanded the operating surgeon, Miss Hetherington. "If so, you can retire to the next room until it is over."

"No, no! Pray hold my hand while the operation is going on," said the patient in a tone of entreaty. "Hold me tight and I will bear everything they may do to me bravely. I could not pass through it otherwise."

be so weak that it was not considered advisable to administer an anæsthetic to him, so he had to undergo the pain of amputation unaided. But Felicia did not shrink from the ordeal of witnessing his sufferings, if by her presence she could do anything toward allaying them. She grasped young Nasmyth's thin white hand firmly in her own warm palm, and turning her face from the operators, directed all her attention to him.

The injured limb, when uncovered, presented a dreadful sight. Gangrene had set in halfway up the leg, and it was necessary to amputate it just below the knee.

Felicia Hetherington watched the poor young man's features turn blue, almost, in their pallor, as the surgeons commenced their merciful, thought terrible task. She saw the damp, cold sweat burst forth from every pore of his face, as they proceeded, felt the grasp of his hand tighten on hers until it became painful, and was thankful when the agony proved too much for his weakened frame to bear, and he swooned away.

The operation was skillfully and promptly performed,—as all operations are nowadays,—and when Archibald Nasmyth came to himself again his leg had been dressed and bound up, his bed straightened, and Miss Hetherington

and look of dismay, which relaxed into calm contentment as he recognized who was by his side.

"So it is all over, and I am alive," were his first words; "and you have actually stood by me all the while, you angel of mercy!"

"Yes, yes, you are safe now! you must not talk and excite yourself, I have whispered Felicia back again."

"But I must thank you. I must tell you what is in my heart, or it will burst upon the invalid. "I should have been helpless without your help. I could not have gone through that agony alone. It was the touch of your hand that sustained me. You have saved my life, and it belongs to you to do as you will henceforward."

"It was a terrible trial for you to go through," replied Felicia softly, "I am very glad, for your sake, that it is over so well!"

"Yes, indeed," interposed the invalid, "but now that it is over. I must as

throw yourself into another fever. So I must beg of you, madam, to say good-bye to Mr. Nasmyth, and not come back till you hear he is fit to receive visitors."

"Most certainly I will not," replied Felicia, as she rose from her chair, "and when I see you again, Mr. Nasmyth, I hope you may be almost well. Good-bye ! Be very good, and do everything that nurse tells you, and we shall soon see you going back to work."

"Going back to work !" echoed the young man sadly. "A cripple for the remainder of my life ! A useless log, of no good to anyone in this world ! After all, it would have been better if they had let me die !"

"No, no, you must not say that ! It is ungrateful. You cannot tell what good things God may not have in store for you."

"He sent *you* to me," exclaimed the young man fervently, "and that should be more than enough to make me believe in his watchfulness and care."

"He is always watchful and careful, my dear young friend," she replied, smiling. "If it had not been I, it would have been someone else."

"No ; I cannot believe that ! If everybody were like you, half the misery of this world would be done away with ! How many of the women of London, with means at their disposal, think of the poor starving wretches their carriage

ninety-nine, then," said Felicia gasping as she held out her hand to him ;
I must not let you talk any longer.
Good-by ! "

Archibald Nasmyth took her hand with his weak, thin one, and raised it gently and gracefully to his lips. The gentle contact made her blood flow swiftly through her veins, and gave her quite a novel sensation.

Those whom she had befriended often tried every possible way by which to express the gratitude they felt for her goodness they could never hope to repay, but their efforts had rather quieted than affected her. But as she felt the soft pressure of Archibald's hand and met the upward, grateful glance of his dark blue eyes, her face grew crimson and her frame trembled with a new pleasure.

She turned swiftly from his gaze and left the room, but when she got out the door she put the hand which he had kissed against her own lips.

a little way into the Park. She did not feel equal to encountering the questions which she knew awaited her in Norfolk Street, where Mabel Selwyn was in attendance to hear how the operation had been borne by her *protégé*.

She wanted time to think first, to decide how she should tell the story, to analyze, in fact, the strange, unusual feeling that had attacked her on having her hand kissed by Archibald Nasmyth.

It was a fact, though a remarkable one, that this was the very first time Felicia Hetherington had ever had her hand kissed. Hers was not the sort of hand that men desire to mumble over. It was large and white and firm, with filbert nails and pink palms—a hand to grasp in times of sickness, or danger, or fear; a hand to hold in the hour of death; but not a plaything for a man's pleasure.

Many had grasped it warmly, many had regarded its open generosity as the means by which their fortunes and lives had been saved, but no one had ever kissed it! And the fact had made thoughts come into Miss Hetherington's head that had never been there before.

She would have laughed anyone to scorn who had suggested that she was falling in love with the handsome young man she had befriended. She ascribed her emotion, at the display of his feeling, simply to the fact that she had so few

Artemida Nashlyu, by keeping
by her side, by constituting herself
deus ex machina, and helping him
with her vast fortune to attain or
his own.

Other women had adopted young
people when they had no children.
Why should not she, who was not
married nor likely ever to be so, take
this lad, who had been thrown by Providence
on her care, and let him partake
of the good things which she did
know how to use by herself?

Would there be anything so
strange if she took him to her house
his recovery and told him that hence-
forward it should be his home? What
comfort and pleasure his presence
would be to her! How he could help
with the management of Cheshunt Farm!
What pleasure he would derive from
the use of the stables and the command
of the shooting preserves!

What gratification it would give her
to be able to make him an allowance

repay her amply by being always by her side, as a dutiful and affectionate son might be, ready to advise and help her in any difficulty.

These thoughts filled her brain till she became quite excited over them, and longed to test what her acquaintances would think of the plan. Would they call it chimeric or improper? Perhaps so, for some of them would be sure to be jealous and fear lest Mr. Nasmyth should monopolize the good things which hitherto they had appropriated for themselves. But she would be guided, in this instance, Felicia Hetherington thought, solely by what her heart told her was right and proper.

She must not decide too hastily, though, and before she settled on anything she would see if Archibald Nasmyth was really a worker, or only a *dilletanté*, who would take advantage of the first chance offered him to escape from labor.

She told herself she was going to be very discreet and firm with regard to him, but the touch of his soft lips still lingered on her hand, and she continued to dream over the look she had met in his languid blue eyes.

Why do women, as a rule, so much admire a languid, sleepy look in a man's eyes? It is very pretty, doubtless, and very suggestive; but the sleepy eyes are not the cleverest, nor the most useful,

black to poor Felicia's common sense.

She had ever been too humble to admire herself or anything she could do, but was ready to worship the good looks of her friends, even those of her woman friends.

She considered Mab Selwyn quite beautiful, and she had never been brought in contact yet with such a handsome face as that of Archibald Nasmyth.

But she determined to be very prudent and wait until she knew more of him before she made any proposition with regard to his future. She might proceed in an ordinary way, she told herself, and try to help him on with his own work before she made any attempt to lift him out of it.

And then she drove home to where Mab was waiting for her, and gave her a graphic account of the operation, and how bravely the patient had borne it, but not a word of the kiss he had pressed upon her hand.

CHAPTER III.

THE AVOWAL.

ALTHOUGH Miss Hetherington was not allowed to see Archibald Nasmyth until the doctors declared the danger of relapse was over, she sent daily to the hospital for news of his welfare, and was delighted to hear that he was progressing rapidly and that all unfavorable symptoms had been safely tided over. Her next thought was to make some provision against his future, and with that view she took into consultation her friend Mr. Selwyn.

Felicia had a two-fold motive in moot-ing the question of young Nasmyth's career to another person. She was endowed with all a woman's astuteness where her feelings were concerned, and wanted to sound, if possible, what strangers would think of her secret idea of furthering the young man's fortunes.

"I am afraid the poor fellow will find himself in very deep water on entering the world of letters again," she said, "unless we interest ourselves in getting him employment. You see, he is a gentleman, and I should say, a proud one, like most of his countrymen, so one could hardly offer him money. But perhaps he has manuscripts lying by him, and you, with your intimate knowl-

lady compared with himself, "you do know what you are asking. That is one of the greatest mistakes that the outside world makes with regard to literature. Publishers will not accept articles on recommendation of a third person. I don't even know what this man Lismyth's style is, or whether he can write at all. I have never heard his name before, and the chances are that he is some penny-a-liner who ekes out his existence by scribbling 'flimsy' for the provincial papers."

"All the more reason that we should help him then," said Felicia stoutly. "He told me that he only wrote as a hobby in a small way. What more can we expect from a lad of his age—four-and-twenty on his last birthday? You can hardly expect him to have the mature brains and experience of a man like yourself, Mr. Selwyn. But if he leaves the hospital without a penny piece in his pocket and no one to help him on his way—weak and languid, witho

man sarcastically, for he was becoming rather jealous of Miss Hetherington's interest in the young stranger, "and keep him there for a month or two,—or a year or two, if more desirable,—until he is restored to perfect health and strength and has started fairly on his way in the world again?"

He expected her to make some smiling disclaimer of his proposal, as being just a little far-fetched, but to his surprise she did nothing of the sort, but caught at the idea immediately. It was the very opening she desired. Coming from a man of such steady views and stern principles as Mr. Selwyn, it seemed to make her path perfectly easy, and she responded to it eagerly.

"How nice and kind of you to think of it, dear Mr. Selwyn!" she exclaimed; "the thought had passed through my mind, but I hardly liked to be the one to propose it. Of course it will be the best plan, and solve every difficulty, without giving him any possible offense. I shall be delighted, too, to have an excuse for leaving town early. I am pining for the country. Only, you must promise to come down with us and bring Mab with you, for though I consider myself quite an old maid, I could not entertain such a handsome young man by myself—could I?"

"Oh! he is so very handsome, is he?" grumbled Mr. Selwyn. "Well, my dear

perfect stranger to Cheshunt Hall before you even know if he is what he professes to be !”

“If we were always to stop to ask if our neighbors were worthy of our help, my dear friend,” Felicia answered softly, “I am afraid few of us would get helped at all ! However, I quite agree with you that it would be extremely foolish to invite anyone to one’s house without ascertaining what or who they were, so I am happy to tell you that I have no fear that Mr. Nasmyth has deceived me in asserting himself to be by birth a gentleman. He told me the other day that his grandfather was the Professor Nasmyth who was at college with my grandfather, and of whom you must have heard him speak in connection with the Pompeian discoveries.”

“Professor Thomas Nasmyth !” exclaimed Mr. Selwyn. “Why, of course all the scientific world knows his name ! So this young gentleman is his grandson. If so, there can be no possible o-

make friends with him at your leisure, and before we break up the party you will have doubtless found some means of helping him in his profession. The grandson of a man like Professor Nasmyth should surely not be left without friends ; but he must be very poor, for he is evidently entirely dependent on his own resources. And I will write and see if Fanny Cuthbert can join us. She has promised me a visit for such a long time. If I can only secure her we shall be one of the pleasantest parties in the world. How much obliged I am to you, Mr. Selwyn, for finding such an agreeable solution of my difficulty ! ”

“ You must not give all your attention to this fascinating young stranger, though,” continued Mr. Selwyn, “ or you will make your other friends jealous.”

As he perpetrated this little pleasantry he wondered what made the usually sedate and calm Miss Hetherington color up to the roots of her hair. Her confusion was so noticeable that the old man gazed fixedly in her face for some seconds from sheer surprise.

“ How can you say such a thing ! ” she ejaculated at last. “ When have you ever known me to neglect old acquaintances for new ones ? And when you know, too, that Fanny Cuthbert is the very dearest friend I have in all the world. Dear old Frank ! How glad I shall be to see her again. But I have a

the knee. He cannot face the outside world until he has an artificial leg. Now I want to bear this expense for you—you know it is nothing to me—how can I set about it? It is such a delicate task, such an unpleasant thing to speak of, and yet so absolutely necessary. Do you think I could persuade the doctors to go in league with me, and let me be answerable for the expense of one, while they profess to order Mr. Nasmyth to supply it by order of the hospital authorities?"

"Where is the young man? At George's? I believe I could manage the business for you, through my friend Thorowgood, who is one of the consulting physicians there. He and I are great chums. We formed part of a surveying expedition in South Africa years gone by, and went through all kinds of dangers together."

"Oh, do manage it for me, then, I entreat you!" said Felicia imploringly. I am most anxious about it for it is so

last a long lifetime. And he will take care that the bill is sent in to me, without anyone, and especially Mr. Nasmyth, being the wiser for it, won't he?"

"Oh, yes, that will be easy enough, though young Nasmyth must be a greater fool than I take his grandfather's son to be, if he imagines that the hospitals, in addition to cutting of legs gratis, can afford to supply their patients with cork ones from the best makers in town."

"He will know no better. Young men like him never think of such things," replied Felicia confidently.

She was delighted to have got her own way so easily, and began to dream all sorts of dreams of what she should do with her *protégé* when the air of the country had restored him to health again.

Could she not find some work for him to do about the estate, she thought, until he had grown to the idea of staying there altogether? But she must introduce the idea very carefully—she must feel her way before she made the startling proposition to him to look upon her as his mother.

Perhaps, Felicia thought sadly to herself, he might not after all like her sufficiently well for that. He might scorn the idea and prefer to pursue his own free way through the world. Well, she would not trouble herself yet about

ickroom she found him in very spirits.

The fact is that Archibald Nasb was sufficiently recovered to be able to realize his position. The first excellent attendant on the removal of the limb was over, also the weakness which had made him not care for anything past, present, or future, and his approaching dismissal from the hospital had begun to stare him very closely in the face. He felt that he was rapidly nearing convalescence, and that in a few days he would have to quit the kindnesses that had sheltered him in his time of need, and wander forth into a harsh and cruel world that had treated him but in a beggarly fashion in the days gone by.

He had been lying for some time, wondering over what he could possibly do. He remembered that he owed a considerable sum to his late landlady.

money to pay for it or a meal? Archibald Nasmyth had often felt the sting of poverty before, but he had never felt himself to be quite such a pauper as he did at the present moment.

His beautiful blue eyes glanced up rather mournfully as Felicia Hetherington approached his side, and he put out his hand to greet her without a smile.

"Why, how is this, Mr. Nasmyth," she said sweetly; "are you not glad to see me after so long an absence? I thought I was never going to receive a card of admission again."

"I am only *too* glad, Miss Hetherington," he replied gravely; "but my pleasure is tempered by the knowledge that your kind visits to me must soon be at an end. I am getting well rapidly. They tell me I shall be discharged as convalescent in a very few days now, and then our present friendship will be over, though my gratitude for all your goodness to me, and my remembrance of it, will never die until I do."

"So you mean to cut me as soon as you are able to run away from me?" replied Felicia, with a smile.

He blushed and stammered:

"No, no, indeed! Only it is not likely that you will care to know me then. I am a pauper, Miss Hetherington! Worse than that—a gentleman who has not the means to dress or live like one. I am not fit company for a lady

disgrace to you or your friends think of me henceforward only as of the many unfortunate creatures w your kind heart has led you to befr and believe me that further interco will only lead to your discomfiture my own."

"I cannot listen to your argume said Felicia, "although I think the you credit. You have been very u unate, I acknowledge that, but al more have you need of friends, a think I have found some for you came here to-day with the inter of making a little proposition for consideration. I—and some frien mine—have been thinking that you certainly not be fit to resume work such a terrible trial as your strengtl just undergone, until you have h complete change. We mean to con together, therefore, to carry you

lanes. There will be nothing there to prevent your writing, if you feel disposed to do so, and we shall not let you leave us until you are fit to be trusted to take care of yourself. Do you agree? Do you like the prospect?"

"*Do I like the prospect?*" repeated Nasmyth bitterly. "Does a man who is starving like the prospect of a good dinner? Does the condemned wretch who believes that another sun will see him hanging on the gallows like the prospect of a reprieve? The idea is only too delightful to me, but how can I consent to throw myself a further burden on your generosity? See how much you have done for me already. It is too much, Miss Hetherington. Your goodness makes me feel ashamed of myself."

"But, my dear young friend, you do not quite understand me," interposed his companion. "You do not realize that such acts are no burden to me—I am too rich to feel them. It is a kindness on the part of anyone to help me to get rid of some of this superfluous wealth, which is only a responsibility to me, and very little pleasure, unless my friends will spend it with me. Imagine, Mr. Nasmyth, I am the possessor of five thousand a year, and my own tastes are so simple that five hundred would amply satisfy them. What can an unmarried woman do with such a sum?"

of me than of it."

She had been led into saying a deal more than she had intended as she concluded the young man the tears standing on her cheeks.

"No one to love you!" he "and with a heart like yours! that is impossible! You underrated your own attractions, or you are too popular. Had you not said it I should have thought you had half the world at your feet."

"What, with my face!" said Felicia quite unaffectedly. "Miss Smyth, you cannot think of what we are saying! No! do not try to comfort me. From a child I have been aware how ugly I am. People have been ashamed to tell me the truth to my face now, but they had no such scruples then, and I grew up with a full knowledge of my personal deficiencies."

Archibald Nasmyth. "Perhaps you are not beautiful, in the ordinary sense of the word ; but is there no beauty but that of coloring and feature ? I know your face ~~is~~ beautiful to me, and always will seem so, when I remember how you looked when you hung over my bed on the day of my operation. You might have been an angel then, Miss Hetherington—an angel of mercy and compassion ; and no common beauty of pink and white flesh and golden hair could ever outvie, in my opinion, the loveliness of your face as you looked hope and comfort into mine. I could have died at that moment, thankfully, could I only have taken you with me into the other world."

Felicia Hetherington's face was suffused with blushes. If ever she looked well she did so then.

"Oh, hush ! You must not talk such nonsense !" she cried warmly, "nor even think it ! What would people say if they could overhear your words ? Look upon me as your warmest and truest friend, if you choose, but don't let your gratitude for anything I may have been able to do for you run away with your common sense. Let us change the subject. Let us talk of the country and what we will do when we get there. By the way, one of my oldest friends, Mr. Selwyn, was talking with me of you this morning. He was ac-

ing, therefore, that he may be able to help you on a little when you are to work. He and his daughter—an literary novice, by the way—are coming down to stay at Cheshunt the same as yourself, so you must make friends with the old man and enlist his interest on your behalf."

"Miss Hetherington," said Arch Nasmyth suddenly, "I cannot go you and your friends to Cheshunt is impossible!"

"Oh, why?" exclaimed Felicia, with genuine disappointment in her voice.

"Because I cannot!" he replied hesitatingly. "It is a woman's request, but you must rest satisfied with it. The thing is quite impossible! It was very kind of you to think of and propose it, but it cannot be."

"But I won't be satisfied with Mr. Nasmyth. You cannot face the world in your present state of weakness. If your friends do not look after you, you will die."

There may be a brilliant future before you. Why will you not try to believe in it? It is because you are so weak that you talk so despairingly. Come down into the country and you will think very differently after a few weeks of rest and fresh air."

"I cannot come!" repeated the sick man.

"Tell me the reason you have altered your mind about it," said Felicia coaxingly. "You seemed so pleased with the prospect at first."

"Because I had not weighed the consequences."

"What are they, now that you have weighed them?"

"Why will you force me to speak the humiliating truth?" he replied fretfully. "It is hard to speak out, yet I suppose I owe it to you. I have told you my circumstances, Miss Hetherington. I am so poor that I have no clothes fit to wear. I could not appear before your friends, nor even before your servants; you would be ashamed of me, and I should be ashamed of myself. Now you have the whole truth, and please don't mention the subject again, or you will make me sorry that I spoke."

And he turned his face away toward the wall so that she could not see his features.

Felicia's kind heart throbbed with pity for his distress. She longed then and there to tell him never to let the

said. "Do you suppose that we are going into the country to follow the fashion? If you do I am afraid you will find yourself woefully mistaken. I, for one, will always dress like an old frump at the best of times, revel in being able to wear out my very oldest things when I go down to Cheshunt Hall. Why, that is just the pleasure of it. You will see me going about all day, Mr. Nasmyth, in a linen bonnet and a big holland apron. I love to make hay, and feed my chickens, and let my dogs sprawl all over me. And are you fond of riding? Ah, no, I forgot," said Felicia, with a glance of divine compassion at his mutilated leg. "It was stupid of me; but I dare say you like driving almost as well, and have the dearest little pair of ponies that you ever saw. And a garden chair and a donkey that shall be considered your exclusive property until you are able to discard it. Don't say you won't come for we will all join in making your stay an agreeable one. And your old clothes

"My dear friend, there is something else," said Felicia, "why cannot you confide in me?"

"I don't know why I should find it so difficult; I suppose it is my pride," replied young Nasmyth, "but I cannot forget that I am a gentleman. Miss Hetherington, there is another obstacle! Before I came here I lived at No. 13 John Street, leading out of Oxford Street. I had had a run of ill luck just then, as I told you, and had been unable to pay my rent for some weeks. My possessions—such as they are—are there, of course, but I don't think the landlady will give them up until I can pay what I owe her. I shall do it in a few weeks,—at least I hope so,—and I am sure she will wait until I can; but that is the reason why I cannot accept your kind invitation. Now don't humiliate me further by offering to pay what I owe her, for I will not let you do so. If my room is still vacant I will go back there and put everything straight in a short time. But I must go there from here."

Felicia Hetherington was silent. For a moment she did not know what to answer. She was so grieved for his poverty, and yet she respected his *amour propre*. Still, were all her pleasant plans for his present well-doing and future prosperity to be knocked on the head for a foolish conventionality?

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a few days sooner or later? Sh
not see a fellow-creature die fo
shame on his part or hers.

"Listen to me, my dear
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greatly astonish you ; but I hav
thinking of it for some time pa
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I have told you that I am much
than I care to be ! I am al
lonely and companionless. I
married and I am not likely to
and I often look forward to t
when I shall no longer care to g
in search of amusement,—whic
amusement to me even now,—ar
stay at home, alone and not u
perhaps, but still not happy.
often wished, during such momen
I had some young person living
to whom I might be of use, a
would be very useful to me in

had anyone to love me as I would be loved."

"But you could find dozens, surely," interrupted Archibald Nasmyth, "who would be only too happy to serve you to your life's end for such a prospect."

"Ah, yes ! perhaps so ; but they may not be the sort of people I could consent to pass my life with. Besides, I want my surplus money to do some great good, to make a life, to enable some aspiring soul to achieve its ambition—and I have thought much of you, Mr. Nasmyth, in connection with this plan of mine."

"You have thought of *me* !" exclaimed the young man, his pale face flushing with his excitement ; "but why of me ?"

"Have you not understood me ? I see you are ambitious, and I know you are poor. I believe that with the help of money you would succeed, and I want my money to help you. Will you let me do it, Mr. Nasmyth ? Will you be my adopted son, and let me share my fortune with you, just as if you really were a son of my own ?"

Archibald Nasmyth did not answer her. He had turned his face upon the pillow and was breathing hard and deep. The gentle soul thought she had offended him, or that he was laughing at her.

"Don't think I am mad," she went on

0
would have been the first to help y
himself, or been glad to see me do :
I did not mean to tell you this so soon
continued Felicia. "I meant to ha
waited until I saw if you liked me w
enough to live in the same house wi
me always, but what you said just no
made me forget my resolution. If y
are to be helped, now is the time to
it, and if you will accept my offer
adoption you need not be any longer t
proud to take what becomes your rig
from my hands."

"You are too sweet—too good—t
kind," he murmured brokenly.

"No, no ! only a sister fellow-creatu
who is very anxious to do some lit
good with the wealth intrusted to h
and who likes you well enough to w
to share it with you."

"It is too much—too much," he s
again.

"Never mind if it is much or littl
said Felicia rather impatiently ; "I
"Will you consent to my pla

Was the idea of being called her son distasteful to him?

"I am sorry," she said gently. "I wish I had not mentioned it. Don't let it make any difference between us, Mr. Nasmyth."

He raised his head and regarded her steadfastly in the face. His eyes were bloodshot and his frame trembled.

"Oh, I have made you worse!" she cried. "Forget what I have said. It was on the spur of the moment. Let us forget it and go on the same as before."

"I can never forget it," replied the young man, as he got hold of her hand and pressed it to his feverish lips. "If I only might speak, but you have made it so hard for me."

"How have I made it hard?"

"If you were a pauper like myself—but all these riches of yours overwhelm me! O Felicia! don't you see what I feel for you? Cannot you guess it? The miracle that your heavenly goodness and compassion have wrought in me? Your son! Oh, never! but your grateful slave and servant forever, if you will! I should not have dared to speak thus if your proposal had not emboldened me; but since you have asked me to share all you have, let me share it, but not as your son—as nothing but your lover and your husband."

He had got the words out at last and bowed his burning face over the hand

cried. "Are you mad, my dear friend? Oh, this is some frenzy left of your delirium. You cannot mean it. You are not in a condition to be able to judge calmly. Do you know my age? I am thirty-five last March, and you are twenty-four! There are eleven years between us! What are you thinking of?"

"I am thinking that I want you for my wife, and that I will never have any other woman. What do I care about your age? I would marry you if you were eighty. The only things I think of are my poverty and crippled condition. How can I be so selfish and ask you to take such a burden on yourself for life? And all your friends say I married you for your money, and I would work myself into the ground if you had need of it. O Felicia, I know I have been too bold, but do not mistrust my motives, for I have but one motive, and that is love!"

He took her hand up to her lips

you will, but don't say you can't believe me when I say I love you, for God is my witness it is the solemn truth. Give me my answer, Felicia, and put me out of my suspense !”

“No, no ! I cannot ! You must give me time to think it all over. It has come upon me like a shock. I had no idea—it is the very last thing I dreamed of. Let me go now, and in a few days you shall have my answer.”

“A few days !” he echoed. “Fancy what I shall feel lying here during those few days.”

“I cannot help it ! The subject is too momentous for both of us ! It would be too terrible to make a mistake !”

“Give me one kiss, then, before you go, in token that you will return as soon as you can, and put me out of my pain,” said Archibald Nasmyth entreatingly. But Miss Hetherington shook her head.

“Not yet !” she said. “Good-by, Archibald ! In a few days I will write to you, or I will come again.”

And with that she hurriedly left the sickroom.

FELICIA HETHERINGTON

straight home and locked herself in her own bedroom. Her head round and round ; she shook all with her agitation ; she could not herself to speak to anyone ; she knew what she was doing.

To say that Archibald Nasmyth's declaration had taken her by surprise to say nothing. Remember that the woman had reached the age of thirty-five years without receiving an avowal of love from any man before.

It is true that, as she said, sundry men had wooed her for her money, but no proposals had been made too serious ; they had been conveyed to her in a light, and in set, formal terms, the simplicity of which even her simplicity had had difficulty in discovering the absence of the only feeling for which she would have bartered her liberty.

sex enjoyed—that of feeling herself to be first with someone ; united for life by ties far closer than those of blood—the silver cord of love which binds two hearts together, until they think and feel together, and are as one.

I hope no one will think I am describing a commonplace old maid, only too ready to throw herself into the arms of any man who said that he loved her for herself alone—a woman of mature years, who apes a simpering girl and believes herself capable of inspiring a passion such as is roused, as a rule, only by the sight of youth and beauty.

Felicia Hetherington was very far from being one of these. She was so modest of her own merits, so diffident of her capability to please, that she could not believe that Archibald Nasmyth was sane when he told her that he loved her.

As soon as she found herself alone she threw off her walking attire and sat down in an armchair and abandoned herself to thought. What was it he had said, she asked herself, with hands to her head. That he loved her—that he wished to be, not her son, but her lover and her husband. Oh, it was impossible ! It could not be ! She, who had given up the idea of marriage for years past, to become the wife of a man eleven years younger than herself ; to become a bride at thirty-five ; to go to church with

would Mr. Selwyn and Maud and Cuthbert say to such an idea? they would shake their heads after first incredulity was over, and she had allowed her vanity to tell her, that it was impossible that a far less so young a man, could marry her, except for her money—that she was the victim of a hunter.

Could she stand such insinuations? Could Archibald stand them? they not poison their love for each other—for she could not help acknowledging in her secret heart that she did love him—infuse a drop of bitterness into the cup of happiness, and turn him, perhaps very shame against her?

But there was another side to the question. There was this world of love, for which her soul had thirsted so long—which it had given up all for—What if his love was

could wave a fairy's wand over his destiny and change want and distress into pleasure and luxury ! She must think of him as well as of her friends and herself !

Their opinion could be nothing to her, in comparison to his good ; even if she suffered a little from their sneers and suspicions, she could bear anything so long as he was happy ! Even at the beginning of their intercourse the unselfish creature could look forward to suffering for this young idol of her imagination without dismay, so long as the suffering did not reach him.

And then she went on to ask, was it quite impossible that Archibald should love her, even if it were with a quieter sort of love than he would have given to a young and beautiful woman ? There had been instances of young men marrying women old enough to be their mothers, and the marriages had turned out as happy as most !

Such an instance, and rather a celebrated one, had taken place not long before, and all the world, who had commenced by laughing at it, had agreed since that it was the best thing that could have happened for both parties concerned.

Of course, in such an event, she would have to be very careful and considerate of Archibald's feelings and wishes. She must never lose sight of the great differ-

always, as an old woman. She was an excellent horsewoman, and when Cheshunt Hall was in the saddle all long. She was a good whip, too, delighted in all country pursuits, though she was essentially feminine, and nothing "horsey" about her.

But, she forgot all that, now that she was pleading the cause of Archibald Smyth with her heart. She saw him in her worst light and placed him in the best. No consideration that he was a cripple and a pauper—a man without friends, or standing, or profession—entered her mind. He was a young god, who offered to bend from Olympus to make her more blessed than she conceived it possible to be, and she was an old, unattractive woman, with nothing whatever to recommend her in his eyes. Thus it is that women often judge such matters and the reason why they often deceive themselves.

Her maternal feelings for the man in the hospital had not m

amount of maternal feeling in the love which all women give all men ?

Do they not delight to sacrifice themselves for them, to take an infinity of unnecessary trouble, to spend their days in thinking of their comfort, their nights in watching over their sleep ?

Directly a woman *really* loves she wants to give up something, to put herself out of the way, to tire herself, to undertake a tedious task, for the man she loves ; sometimes to make him jolly uncomfortable under the process as well !

Have you ever watched a dog with her pups, how miserable she makes them by her intense solicitude ; how, directly they have settled down comfortably of suck, she licks them so violently that they are pushed off to a distance, where they whine piteously from disappointment, and upon which, believing them to be cold, the mother disposes her fat body right on the top of them, where they are shut out from both light and food ?

Human mothers behave very much in the same way with their offspring, and, in a lesser fashion, so do wives with their husbands. There are many married men whose chief grievance is that their wives will not let them alone. They would be very happy but for that ! It is the maternal instinct that makes women do it. They always want to be cosseting something.

...happy, he might be at once
Hall if he were master there !
luxurious writing room she would
fitted up for him ; the horses he w
have for riding and driving ; the
serves and covers he would hav
shoot over, and the immunity from
monetary troubles and cares which
would enjoy ! For she had alread
solved that if this wonderful propos
came to pass she would execute a
in his favor that should make him i
pendent of her from their marriage

She placed the proposal before
self in every kind of light before
went to rest that night, and based
decision solely on the question, Wou
be for Archibald's happiness or
Of herself she was too humble, too
selfish to think at all. If the mar
turned out to be a failure, it was
his young head it would fall with
heaviest blow.

Besides which, if he were happy
could not fail to be. That was the

should remain in her own room all the evening, and refuse even to go down to dinner.

She was such a healthy, unaffected woman that anything like the vapors was unknown to her. Her maid, Warrender, could not believe her ears, when she went upstairs to help her mistress to dress, to hear her say that all she required was a cup of tea, and she would take it in her room.

"Dear me, ma'am, are you not feeling well?" asked the servant.

"Quite well, thank you, Warrender, but I have rather a difficult matter to think over, and wish to be alone. If I go downstairs, Mr. or Miss Selwyn might look in and disturb me. Should either of them call, say, please, that I have a slight headache, and do not wish to see anyone to-night. And when you have brought me my tea, you can leave me, Warrender, for I shall not want anything more."

"Very good, ma'am," replied the maid; but she said in the servants' hall afterward that she was sure there was something very much out of the way with the mistress; she seemed as if she had been crying her eyes out.

Had they but known what their mistress was really thinking of they would have been surprised indeed.

The next day brought Felicia a short note from Archibald Nasmyth. It was

"DEAR MISS HETHERINGTON
ran]: For mercy's sake, give me
answer to-day. I cannot wait
longer. I have not slept all night
the nurse says I have gone back s
yesterday. This suspense will kill
If I have been too bold, as I gre
fear, and you are angry with me, be
ciful and give me my quietus at onc

"Yours ever,

"ARCHIBALD NASMYTH

By this time it was far advance
the afternoon, and she was thinking
taking a drive, though not to the ho
tal. She, too, had not slept all ni
and thought the fresh air would do
good. But when she read her lov
letter she felt she must go to him,
though she had not a definite answe
give him.

He must not be left a prey to his
pense for another night. It might
him serious harm. So she set of

As soon as Felicia appeared, therefore, the nurse made her exit and the two friends were alone. Archibald put his wasted hand in hers and looked imploringly into her face.

"Have I sinned altogether beyond forgiveness?" he said.

Felicia did not know how to answer him. She grew red and trembled and was silent. The young man saw her confusion and interpreted it aright. He pulled her face down to his and kissed her several times before she could remonstrate with him.

"You love me!" he exclaimed rapturously. "You cannot deny it! I can read it in your face! Oh, you dear angel, what have I said or done to incline your heart toward me!"

"I suppose I could not help it, because you suffered so terribly, and I felt for you so much," she answered, "but, my dear, you must not take it for granted. I came to see you this afternoon because I could not bear to think of you living here alone, without anyone to tell your thoughts to, and believing me to be unkind perhaps, all the time. But I have not made up my mind yet, Archibald. I have been thinking over the matter deeply, but there is so much to speak to you about, before I can be sure that you know your own mind regarding it. We must not deceive each other, nor ourselves, you know. It is

for me.

"I don't see that," said Archibald Nasmyth.

"Oh, my dear, you forget the difference in our ages—eleven years! trouble will be over so much sooner for me than for you! When I sink into grave you will still be a young man comparatively speaking, and ready, perhaps, to take another wife. You never forget how old I am!"

"Now look here," replied the young man, "you are talking nonsense! In the first place, it is a moot question which goes the sooner, you or I. If the doctors had to decide it they would probably say it was I, for I have had my strength sapped by this confounding operation, while you are a remarkably healthy woman in the prime of life. But that is not the question. It is—do you love me well enough to take a wretched cripple for your husband? Do you know, Felicia," he added, with a humorous look that went straight

while that I have the greatest cheek of any man you know."

"Indeed I have thought no such thing. The puzzle to me is, whatever put it into your head to fancy that you want to marry me. Had you accepted my proposal to adopt you as my son you would have enjoyed just as many advantages, and been free to choose your own life into the bargain."

"That is your view of the matter, not mine. I love you too much to be happy in the position of your son. It is ridiculous, absurd—it could not be! The two feelings are not to be compared with each other. Neither would you have been happy acting as my mother; and what would you have said when I married a wife some day and left you? How would you have liked that?"

"I am afraid it would have made me very unhappy," whispered Felicia.

"Just so; and if you had married someone else, what would have become of me? No, no, Felicia, you have been deceiving yourself! You could not be happy living with me in any position but that of my wife. If you cannot make up your mind to that we had better part for good and all."

"But we must consider the matter more deliberately before we arrive at any conclusion," said Felicia. "I know nothing of marriage, of course, Archibald, and I know very little of men;

thing. I have seen men who marry young and beautiful women tire of them within a few years, and leave them to others, and that is an insult I can never overlook. I don't think I can be proud in a general way," continued Felicia dubiously, as if she were claiming too much merit for herself, "but I should be proud in that. The knowledge of my own deficiencies would make me proud; and if husbands can tire of the girls they marry, how much less chance has an old woman like myself of being able to keep faithful to me?"

"If all men are so bad," argued Archibald Nasmyth, "that none are faithful, what can it signify if a wife young or old—plain or handsome—condemns you out of your own mouth, you dear simpleton! By your own showing, it would not avail you to be seventeen. But you are mistaken. I am not as untrue as you imagine. In all events I am not and if you are a

Felicia, and in time I hope I shall succeed, for they tell me I have the true grit in me to make a successful author ; but while the grass grows, you know my dear, the horse starves, and this horse was on the brink of starvation when you picked him up from under the wheels of the omnibus. I have not a shilling in hand. How can I have the face to propose to begin life with you under such circumstances ? I should not be able to buy a suit of wedding clothes. You must let me go back to the treadmill till I have saved a few pounds. I cannot come to you an utter pauper. You would be ashamed of me ! ”

“ Never ! ” exclaimed Miss Hetherington ; “ and if this thing is to be, Archibald, it is now that my money will benefit you most. I cannot and will not let you go back to those wretched lodgings. Neither will I consent to marry you, unless we are to be friends from the very beginning—perfect and complete friends ! Heaps of people have accepted my assistance to help them on in life before now—people who had no earthly claim on me, except that I had a superfluity of this world’s goods, and they had not. Mr. Selwyn has patented several inventions of his at my expense, and evinced no pride about doing so ; and I have paid the cost of bringing out the book of more than one author, of whom I only knew the name. I liked

counted for to God. If strangers take some of it for their own use with considering themselves placed under great an obligation to me, why can you? If you—you—*really* love me," continued Felicia, with a blush made her look younger than any else could have done, "you have established a claim on everything that mine. It would be hard if my purse to be open to the claims of all human and that the man I love, and who loves me, should alone be unable to benefit its contents! You will not refuse me great a pleasure, Archibald! You let me place a small sum to your credit at any bank you may name, so that I may be independent when you leave these walls."

"You are too good to me," he murmured, "yet how can I refuse, if to give your generous soul pleasure. It is not the right thing for me to do, it hurts my pride a little; still, on condition, I will consent to let you

at your hands. But otherwise, no power on earth shall make me do it ?”

“But, Archibald, if you had fallen in with my first views for your advancement, and consented to fill the position of my son, I fully intended to have made a settlement on you that should have rendered you independent of me for life. Why should I not do so now ?”

“Because I am not in the position of your son, and never will be,” he replied.

“I must be all or nothing to you. If I am to be all, I will take any favor at your hands that you may choose to give me. But if I am to be nothing, then I have had far more than enough already, and when I quit these walls, I shall return to my old haunts and my old life, and only remember you as an angel who came to me in my affliction, but was too pure and too good to stay by my side when the need was past.”

“Oh, no, no ! I am not that, indeed ! My only fear is, of not being good enough, or attractive enough, to fill all the needs of so young a life as yours. But if I consent to what you wish, will you give me one promise in return ?”

“A hundred, if you require them,” he returned earnestly.

“It is nothing very hard, Archibald. It is only a promise to maintain perfect trust and confidence in me on one point. If—if you should ever find that I am not sufficient for your soul’s need,—that

woman, come to me at once and me so, frankly and without fear. I leave me to find out the truth for self. It would make the disappointment so much harder to bear! I shall blame you, nor reproach you, dear. I am not quite sure if such things are within a man's power to prevent. (I promise to come and tell me. It will not surprise me so much as it would another woman, because you see this has come so unexpectedly to me. I never thought such a thing could be, and though I do not pretend that it would not be a little trouble, yet I shall bear it better from your lips than from those of anyone else. Besides, if I believe your sacred promise, I shall always be at rest until you come and tell me I were mistaken in your feelings respecting me. Do you understand?"

"No, Felicia, I do not! I cannot understand such unselfishness and sweetness and charity as your words display. I did not know they existed on earth."

where am I to find another woman like yourself? You stand alone in the world! Nature made you, and broke the mold!"

"But, Archibald, I do not mean that you will find another woman who will love and care for you more than I do, for indeed, my dear, I do not think any-one could do that. I have been starved for want of love all my life, and I feel so grateful and so happy that it has come to me at last, that I do not know what to say or think about it. I can only thank God and wonder! But it was my poor face I was thinking of. I know I am much uglier than the majority of my sex, Archibald. I look at my plain features in the glass, and especially since I have known you, and think there never was an uglier woman. And men are so fond of beauty, even the old ones; and a young, handsome fellow like you—for you are very handsome, you know, Archie—should marry a young and lovely girl, with whom he would be proud to be seen in public. You must not think me morbid, dear, but I cannot disguise from myself what people will say when they see me and you together, and how much it will be to my disadvantage. And when I mix with pretty girls, what a terrible difference there will be! You see, I never thought of such things till I knew you, but now that you wish to

the young man thoughtfully, because you are too honest to be taken in by flattery, and too clever to be deceived by evasion. So you force me to refer to you in your own coin. Grant then, that your face is not what the world calls beautiful, cannot you imagine that it is more beautiful to the eyes of those who love you ; know your exceptional worth than straight features and vivid color could be? You have got it into your head, somehow, that we men care nothing but the lust of the eye ; so suppose you will hardly believe when I tell you that I don't care for young girls, nor yet for pink cheeks, golden tresses, or enormous eyes and well marked eyebrows and sweeping lashes—all the novelist's stock in trade in fact, which we have read of, over and over again, but would find exceedingly sickly were we to encounter it in life. Were I placed in the way of thousands of such beauties, I would not

to me I shall be the happiest man alive ! ”

Felicia Hetherington was shaking all over with the joy of hearing this declaration. She felt as if her youth was renewed like that of the eagle ; spring had sprung up in her heart and spirit, and she felt as if she were no older than the man who sat beside her with his hand fast clasped in hers.

“ But you will give me the promise ? ” she pleaded.

“ I will give you the promise, most solemnly,” he replied.

“ Then, if it is really for your happiness, my dear boy, I consent,” she went on, “ and I will be your wife as soon as you are ready to be my husband.”

The young man turned and folded her in his arms, and they sealed the bond in a long kiss.

“ I am so happy,” sighed Felicia, as he released her. “ A new life is opening before me, and I feel I have never really lived till now. And now, Archie, you will accede to my wishes and leave the hospital, as soon as they will let you go, for the Grosvenor Hotel. It is better you should be there for a few days before we go down to Ches-hunt Hall. From there you can defray your debts, collect your belongings, and have what orders you may give executed. I shall lodge a couple of hundred pounds at the bank in your name,

long, entirely at your own expense.

"How am I to repay you?" he said.

"By loving me a little, darling," she answered, as she stooped and kissed him. The difference in their ages made the maternal instinct still very strong in her. She could not assume the airs and graces of a younger woman. With the knowledge that he loved her, and that she was the benefactress and he the benefited, all her shyness had vanished. "Only love me, Archie, and trust me, and I shall never want any other payment."

"I love you with all my heart and soul and strength," he answered fervently.

"I will come again to-morrow," said Felicia, with a lovely smile of happiness as she prepared to quit him, "and then I shall hope to see you making your first efforts to walk about the room!"

"Yes, they tell me I am to have a leg this evening," said Archibald Nesmyth, with a grimace. "Pleasant

are we to tell this to our friends or not?"

"It must be just as you like. I am too happy to care about anything or anybody but yourself!"

"Then I would like to break it to them by degrees. Not that I am not very proud of it; but I am afraid it will take some time to convince them that anyone could possibly want to marry me!"

"They must be fools!" remarked Archibald Nasmyth, and with that she ran away from him, with spring in her heart and a smile of complete contentment on her lips.

Part the Second.—Summer.

CHAPTER V.

THE ENGAGEMENT.

FELICIA HETHERINGTON and Frances Cuthbert had been bosom friends ever since they were little girls at school together. Miss Cuthbert was ten years older than Miss Hetherington, and quite a different sort of person. She had been a fine handsome girl of fourteen when poor snubbed and unloved Felicia had joined the school circle, and she had constituted herself her ally and protector at once. For let no one think that "fagging" and teasing and bullying were confined to the atmosphere of a boys' school. Quite as much of it goes on among girls, though not in so rude a fashion.

— with horror fr

heart to her for life. Gladly would she have shared all she possessed with her early friend, and asked her to take up her abode with her, if Miss Cuthbert would or could have accepted the offer.

But she had her own duties to perform. All her time and attention were taken up by an aged and infirm mother, to whom she was the only tie left upon earth, and who would have drooped and died without her.

It was very seldom, therefore, that Miss Cuthbert had an opportunity of visiting her old friend, but her early affection for her had never diminished, and Felicia Hetherington still thought Frances Cuthbert to be the handsomest, truest, and noblest friend a woman ever possessed, and gave her all her confidence.

The praise was not undeserved. Miss Cuthbert was a handsome woman still, with good features, fine dark eyes, an abundance of hair, and a commanding figure. It was her own fault that she remained unmarried. The men had not left her unsought, as they had done poor Felicia.

Notwithstanding that her income was a very moderate one, she had received several proposals, but all her heart—and it was not such a soft one as that of her friend—was buried in the grave of a certain young officer, to whom she had been engaged in her youth, but who had

cheerful and resigned by this time rather given to laugh at the id women marrying after their first is past. She had turned into a practical business-like woman, who took somewhat like a pill that had swallowed, so the less fuss made of the better.

For this reason, Miss Hetherington though she did not dream of concealing anything from her bosom friend rather shy of confiding her very romantic love affair to her, and resolved to say nothing about it until she could do so to a person.

At the same time she looked forward with the keenest enjoyment to meeting her again. For Frank—they had been “Frank” and “Felix” to each other in the old days, and kept up the habit when they were in private—had really promised to join the household at Cheshunt Hall, as soon as they were settled there. A cousin had volunteered to take her place in the c

day that she arrived at Cheshunt Hall. Mr. Selwyn, with his daughter Mab, and Archibald Nasmyth had been established there for more than a fortnight. The invalid still looked pale and thin, but his spirits and strength were wonderfully improved, and he spent almost all his days in the grounds, being drawn about in a Bath chair, by a little pony, which Felicia had purchased expressly for his use.

Their secret was still their own, neither Mr. Selwyn nor his daughter having the least idea of it ; but they had many a pleasant hour together for all that, while Archie was lounging about the gardens in his Bath chair, and Felicia walked by his side, or sat down on her campstool and read the papers to him.

Indeed, everybody there combined to spoil the young man ; so that he felt as if he had been suddenly lifted up from hell to heaven, and had become lapped in a blissful kind of sleepy contentment.

On the day that Frances Cuthbert was expected Felicia became quite excited. She was burning to hear what Frank would think of this affair ; if she would envy her for her great good luck, and if she would admire Archie's beautiful eyes, high forehead, and elegant figure as much as she did.

Although she would not have admitted that her friend's opinion could possibly

caged bird whenever she thought of telling her the truth.

She drove down to the station to meet her in a pretty open curricule, drawn by a pair of cream-colored cobs, and threw her arms, when she alighted from the railway carriage, as if they had been the two schoolgirls who had kissed each other so effusively in the day long ago.

"O Frank ! my dear old Frank," exclaimed Felicia, with the tears streaming in her soft eyes from exceeding joy. "How glad I am to see you again ! I have been waiting here for half an hour. I thought the train would not arrive."

"And yet we are in excellent time," replied Miss Cuthbert, as she warmly returned her embrace. "But how young you are looking, Felix ! Ten years younger than when I last saw you. What have you been doing to yourself ?"

Felicia reddened to the roots of her hair.

"*We!*" echoed Miss Cuthbert. "Who are 'we'?"

They were in the carriage by this time, Felicia performing her rôle of charioteer with consummate skill, and sending her little steeds along the road at a spanking rate. She plied the whip rather unnecessarily as she answered her friend's question, but for all the attention she professed to be giving to her horses Frances Cuthbert could see the color again mount to her cheeks as she replied :

"Only my old friends—Mr. Selwyn and his daughter Mabel, and Mr. Nasmyth."

"Mr. Nasmyth ! That is the gentleman who was in the hospital, is it not?"

By which it may be seen that Felicia had not told her bosom friend as much as she might have done about her acquaintanceship with Archibald Nasmyth.

"Yes," she replied. "He is an author though not a well-known one yet—the grandson of the Professor Nasmyth who was at college with grandpapa. You must have heard him speak of him."

"I don't remember it. And is this gentlemen a scientific man also?"

"He is nothing at present but a great invalid ! He had the misfortune to have his leg amputated, you know ! He is not able to do more than limp across the room yet."

heart as ever, Felix! You are not taking trouble or going to expense for some stranger who has no claim on me. I only hope this gentleman is grateful for your kindness. I am always afraid of your being taken in, or requited, in return for your generosity.

"Oh, no one could be more grateful for any attention shown him than Nasmyth is, Frank. Mr. Selwyn and Mab are both most kind to him. I said this morning that we were spoiling him among us; but that is nonsense. He is as weak yet as an infant, and no one with any heart could fail to pity and try to help him."

"Well, he has fallen into good hands. Felix, I can answer for that," said Cuthbert; "and your vocation of a doctor seems to have done you good. I don't think I have ever seen you look so bonny! You are growing quite plump in your old age! Growing down instead of upward. If this is the effect of your Cheshunt air, I shall expect

dismay. "Why, you are only thirty-seven ! "

"Close upon forty, Felix ; and that's old enough in all conscience for anything. I often smile to myself, when I think how you and I used to talk in the old days of the handsome husbands we were to have, and remember that here we are, two old maids, with all our chances of matrimony over. How superlatively beautiful those ideal lovers were to be ! I think yours was usually to have fair hair and blue eyes, Felix ; and mine was to be dark as night, with flashing eyes and hyacinthine locks. What silly creatures girls are ! And here we are, on the shelf, with the husbands vanished like a dream."

"But, Frances," interposed Felicia timidly, "women do marry late in life, sometimes, and I do not think one's early ideas of beauty often last. One is more fit to make a choice when one has had a little experience."

"Some women may," said her friend, rather brusquely, "but they must be fools—not sensible people like you and me ! We know our day is past. You have often told me you were quite aware that no man would seek you now except for your money ; and as for myself, you know all the love I ever had to give lies in poor John's grave ! No, my dear, I think we may lay in the caps, after all ! Orange blossoms are out of all taste and

Felicia said nothing, but sent it spinning along the road as if she were to reach the Hall and get the matter over. She must stop Frank's remarks at once, she thought. So sharp-sighted. She might see something from Archie's look, or mock and chaff her about it ; and "chaff" what Felicia could not have endured on that subject. It was too sacred to

When she reached home she was delighted to find that her guests were in the grounds, so she could follow Cuthbert to her appointed bed-chamber and make her confession at once.

"I am glad they are out," she said as she entered Miss Cuthbert's room. "Now I shall have you for an hour to myself, and we will have tea up together, and a cozy chat. For I have something to tell you, Frank, that will surprise you very much indeed much that I hardly know how to tell it !"

"You have ?" replied Miss Cuthbert.

"No, no, nothing of that sort," said Felicia, with confusion; "it is a much more personal matter than that. I don't know what you'll say to me, Frank, when I tell you that I am engaged!"

"Engaged for this evening, do you mean?" exclaimed the other. "Oh, Felix, why should you hesitate to tell me? I don't mind taking my dinner alone for once in a way, and can amuse myself perfectly well till you come home again. Are your friends going also, or will the poor sick man be left on my hands?"

"No, no, dear, you do not understand what I meant. I—I—am—engaged to be married, Frank!"

"*What!*" exclaimed Miss Cuthbert, as she turned round to face the speaker, with her hairbrush in her hand. "Engaged to be married! Are you having a joke at my expense, Felix, or are you going off your head?"

"Neither one nor the other, I hope," said poor Felicia, shrinking before her friend's look of astonishment. "I knew you would not believe me, but it is true. I am engaged to Mr. Nasmyth. I have told no one but you about it. Not that anything you could say would make me change my mind, only I have always told you everything since we were children together, and I should not have liked to keep this back. But, whatever you may think, please don't laugh at me,

in Felicia's voice that Frances Cuthbert went up to her and kissed her.

"My dear old friend," she said, "do you imagine I should laugh at you? Have I ever shown any lack of sympathy in your concerns before? I am a little surprised at your news, I confess, but if it makes you happy I shall be very glad of it, for your sake. Let me congratulate you, dear! When I first said you were engaged I thought it must be to Mr. Selwyn, for I have heard several rumors, even down in Wiltshire, that you and that gentleman were likely to make a match of it."

"Mr. Selwyn!" echoed Felicia, something like contempt. "No, indeed. We are very good friends, but I have never thought of being more."

"And this Mr. Nasmyth," continued her friend inquiringly. "He is somewhat of an elderly man, the way I suppose?"

Felicia blushed again.

"No, that is the worst of it, or

you would like to say, but don't say it, please. I can't help it ; it is just one of those things over which one has no control, and it is settled, for good and all, so no talking will make any difference."

She waited a moment for her friend's answer, but no answer came. Miss Cuthbert was busily engaged twisting up her hair, which, though iron-gray, was very abundant. Finding she did not speak, Felicia went on :

"I dare say that you, with all your heart, as you say, in the grave of poor John Astor, who was several years older than yourself, cannot sympathize with, or understand, my promising to marry a man almost young enough to be my son ; and I wanted to adopt him as my son first, Frank. It was actually on my telling him so that I discovered he loved me in another way ; and when the truth broke on me I found, to my astonishment, that I had deceived myself, and that I loved him—oh, more dearly than I could ever tell you, or make you believe ! I have been so little loved in my lifetime, Frank," Felicia went on humbly, "and I have had so little pleasure. You must not blame me too much for accepting what comes within my reach !"

Then Miss Cuthbert found heart of grace to speak.

"Blame you, Felix ?" she said. "I have no more inclination, than I have

mistress, and a man's actions are dictated by good and motives. But to marry a boy! A half your age! What can you be thinking of? Do you imagine that he ever keep faithful to you?"

"Not keep faithful to me!" cried Felicia, in a voice of horror. "Should you think so?"

"By my knowledge of human nature, Felix! I cannot help thinking you about to make a very dangerous experiment. This young man's heart doubtless full of gratitude to you for what you have done for him, and he may be—mind, I don't say he is—inflated with the idea of walking into such a comfortable home as this without any trouble on his part. But man's nature, with regard to women, is decidedly fickle when the first excitement is past, and when he has become accustomed to have all his wishes gratified, don't you think there is a considerable danger of his fancy turning to metal more attractive than the present?"

"My dear, dearest Felix, what have I said to make you cry like this? I only meant to warn you. But there, you goose, I will say no more! I see you are too far gone for an old maid's cautions to be of any use! It's all jealousy you know, my dear girl. I am envious of your handsome lover. Come, dry your eyes and think no more about it, or I will go back to Llangibby."

"I know I am foolish," gasped Felicia. "I tell myself so twenty times a day. Archie is so handsome and clever and young, and I am so ugly and old and stupid! It seems ridiculous that he should care for me—especially in that way! But he swears he does, and that no other way would make him happy, and my greatest desire is to give him happiness—even at the expense of my own. I have put it all before him so plainly, and yet he declares that he wants no one but me. What am I to do, Frank? It is absurd, as you say, but he really seems as if he meant it."

"And of course he means it," replied her friend, who was concerned to see the effect her words had produced, "and he must be a sensible young man into the bargain to have found out what a treasure a heart like yours is! You are too good for any man, that is the truth, Felix! I should have been jealous of your marrying anybody, even had he been King of England! But I will try

when I am by. He will find I am jealous of my Felix as if I were her band myself !”

“ Oh, you silly old darling !” Felicia with a smile, and then the friends threw their arms around other’s necks and cemented their affection afresh with a kiss.

But when Miss Cuthbert was introduced to Archibald Nasmyth her order was renewed. The return of health and strength had made the young look even younger than he really was. His pale clear skin and soft wavy hair gave him a very boyish appearance which his clean shaven face tended to increase. He was alone in the library resting from his afternoon drive through the grounds, when they first saw him, and Felicia took her friend to him once.

“ Archie, this is my dear old friend Frances Cuthbert, of whom you have heard me speak so much. You must be good friends with her. dear. as I

smyth, as he stretched out his hand to the newcomer; "and I am longing for the day when everyone shall know it. I don't see the object of concealment myself, but Felicia wishes it, and that is, of course, sufficient for me."

"I think it advisable not to say anything about it till the present party breaks up," rejoined Felicia, blushing. "My friends might think it had been too suddenly agreed upon; besides, I feel I can convey the news better in writing. How have you been amusing yourself this afternoon, Archie?"

"Oh, Miss Selwyn and I have had a charming time upon the lawn, reading out our compositions to each other. She is really a very clever girl. She read me some of her verses. I had no idea she could compose so well. Her stanzas are lovely. I am sure my old paper, *The Electric Light*, would accept them. The editor always kept a corner each week for poetry."

"Perhaps you can give Mab an introduction to him, Archie? I should be infinitely obliged to you if you could help her on at all, especially as Mr. Selwyn is interesting himself on your behalf. It would be a graceful return on your part."

"I intend to do so, if possible. She has a tale half finished, which she laid by because she did not see her way to completing the plot satisfactorily. But

gether to-morrow, and make a st
the honeysuckle arbor if you ha
objection, Felicia."

"Objection, my dear Archie
plied his *fiancée*; "how could I
any possible objection? I prom
one shall disturb you at your wo
you must take care not to catc
sitting out there too long. You a
a giant for strength yet, remembe
added, with solicitude.

"I don't think much harm wi
pen to me while I have you t
after me. Do you, Miss Cuthbert?
the young man, glancing at that l

"No," she answered gravely, "I
Felicia of old. She thinks of ever
before herself. You have wo
truest heart in the world, Mr. Nas

"Oh, hush!" cried Felicia;
come Mr. Selwyn and his daught

And at the same moment
entered the room. Fanny Cu
took a dislike to Mabel Selwyn at

displayed above her flimsy frock, and contrasted significantly with her hostess' plain Quaker-like gray gown, which was cool and pleasant in appearance, but rather staid.

Both the father and daughter were profuse in their welcome to Miss Cuthbert, of whom they had heard so much from their dear Miss Hetherington; but she could not help observing that as soon as they had finished with her they turned their attention to young Nasmyth, whom they seemed to claim as their own property.

"You have been introduced to our young friend here, Mr. Nasmyth, I presume, Miss Cuthbert," said Mr. Selwyn; "the grandson of the celebrated Professor Nasmyth of King's College. He has been wise enough to take up literature as his profession, and if he only follows in the footsteps of his grandfather he will do well."

"You flatter me, Mr. Selwyn," exclaimed young Nasmyth. "However hard I may try, I can never hope to emulate my grandfather."

"Oh, I don't know that," interposed Mabel, in a pert voice. "I have been reading papa that paper of yours on the appearance of comets this afternoon, and he thinks very highly of it—very highly indeed. Don't you, papa?"

"I certainly think it shows great promise," acquiesced Mr. Selwyn

my fortune made."

Felicia's soft eyes rested on him moment with a look of mingled and affection, but she made no remark on the subject, and dinner being immediately announced the party adjourned to the dining room.

Here the conversation, being continued, turned entirely on literature. Mr. Selwyn relating several stories to editors and publishers, to which Nasmyth listened greedily; while she spoke on the same topics in the assured manner, and as if she had been an author of long standing, instead of a mere tyro who had just got her first production accepted by the press.

These three were so engrossed in the subject that interested them most, that Felicia, their hostess, seemed to Cuthbert to be left considerably on the cold, and after a while she ventured to let them see she thought so.

"Well, all this talk of publishing may be very interest-

hunter from Lord Firminston just before I left town, and I have been trying to gentle him since. But he is rather a handful for a woman."

"Oh, you can manage anything," returned her friend carelessly. "I know your pluck and skill of old, Felicia! You are the best horsewoman I have ever seen! Do you ride, Miss Selwyn?"

"No," replied Mab hesitatingly; "I have never had the opportunity to learn. Papa has not been able to keep a horse for me!"

"My dear Mab," exclaimed Miss Hetherington, "there is the gentlest little cob in the stables that is entirely at your service, if you would like to learn to ride now. I could teach you myself in half a dozen lessons. Or if you would prefer a more experienced instructor, my old coachman is a proficient in the art. It was he who taught me!"

"No, thank you, dear Miss Hetherington," said Mab sweetly. "It is awfully good of you, but I do not care about learning—at least just at present, when Mr. Nasmyth requires so much of our attention. You would feel very lonely if we all went out riding and left you by yourself, wouldn't you?" she continued, addressing the young man.

"Oh, but I must not deprive you of so great a pleasure," he replied. "I am trouble enough to you all as it is!"

must not neglect our profession Nasmyth, for anything. We both our fortunes to make, remember are not so happily situated as dear Hetherington,—who can do just chooses in the matter,—are we ?”

Archibald Nasmyth said “No course, but his eyes sought Felix he said it, and made her heart with joy, as she thought how soon must all learn that her fortune be his, and how surprised they be at the news.

“Felix !” said Miss Cuthbert, were exchanging a few last words retiring for the night, “I don’t like girl, Miss Selwyn. What may ask her here ?”

“Not like Mab ?” replied with open eyes. “Oh, I think such a nice, clever girl ! Besides has always had the run of my

sure you you are quite mistaken. He has never even hinted at such a thing. But never mind him. Tell me what you think of—of—Archie ! ”

“ He is superlatively handsome, my dear ; so handsome that I don’t wonder that you have overlooked the trifling disadvantage of his having only one leg.”

“ But that is the very thing that made me love him, Frank. It is so sad for him, poor darling—so very, very sad ! ”

“ Well, when he wants you to love him a little more he must cut the other off, I suppose.”

“ I couldn’t love him more,” said Felicia. “ But do you wonder that I long to make the remainder of his life easy and happy for him ; that I would remove all trouble and pain from his shoulders if I could ; that I want, if possible, to make him forget he has gone through so terrible an experience ? ”

“ I wonder at nothing that your loving heart dictates, Felix,” replied her friend. “ You are made up of love for your fellow-creatures. All I trust is, that Mr. Nasmyth may requite your care for him as it deserves. He will be a heartless man if he does not, and he will be a very happy man if he does.”

“ Then he will be a very happy man,” whispered Felicia. “ I am sure of that ! ”

“ Good-night, you goose, then, and go

CHAPTER VI.

THE PICNIC.

THE summer days flew by on w Felicia Hetherington was so h that she could not sleep. Each m ing excitement waked her with the d and she would rise and dress he and walk about the grounds of C hunt Hall before anybody else wa trying to realize the good fortune had befallen her.

She felt so tender over Archi Nasmyth in his weakness, so abstu grateful to him for loving her, so el at the prospect of having him for friend and help and counselor thro life, that there was nothing she w not have done, or sacrificed, to r him for the difference he had ma her existence.

feel himself independent of her and everyone.

"Of course, if our marriage comes off, Mr. Grant," she said, "everything I have will be my husband's ; but I shall feel easier if this settlement is made upon Mr. Nasmyth at once."

"But would it not be better to wait until you are married, to render this young gentleman independent of you?" remonstrated the solicitor.

"No, not at all. We might never be married, something might intervene to prevent it. I might die in the interim, and all my fortune go to those mythical cousins of mine in Australia, whom I have never seen or heard of, except in connection with their being the next of kin. Please to draw up the settlement as I wish, Mr. Grant ; but I shall say nothing about it unless the necessity should arise. As matters stand at present, the marriage is fixed to take place in September."

"Very good, Miss Hetherington. Your wishes are, of course, law. The draft of the settlement shall be sent you for endorsement next week ; and I wish you every possible happiness in your new venture. No one could deserve it more !"

"Thank you, Mr. Grant ! No one has ever had a better prospect of it, I am sure of that !" answered Felicia, smiling.

other, opening her eyes. "O surely that is a great deal too. Supposing he were to leave another woman, either before marriage! Is he to take the first of your fortune with him?"

Felicia turned pale under the position.

"Frank," she said, "do you think what you are saying? What diabolical motives you ascribe to my poor husband! But if he could do such an awful thing—if Archie did desert me—he might as well rob me of all I possess with him, for he would have robbed me of my best treasure, and my rest would seem worthless without it."

"Well, my dear, of all the infamies I have ever seen you are the worst. They say if we take a late start in life it goes hard with us. I am sure you are an example of that. You've got it very, *very* bad, Felix!"

"I'm afraid I have! But never mind me and my follies now. Have you?"

one of the party. I have asked him with an eye to you, Frank ! He will suit you, I know, down to a T ; and he wants a wife sadly. Mrs. Waddington died about two years ago, and left him with five little children. It would be a real charity on your part if you could made make up your mind to take compassion on him, and go and superintend the Vicarage *ménage*."

"*Bien obligé*," replied Miss Cuthbert, laughing. "You catch a good-looking young fellow for yourself, and want your dear particular friend to put up with a second-hand parson. No, thank you, my dear ! I am not so devoted to widowers—to say nothing of children—as all that, and shall direct my charitable intentions nearer home. I have not yet quite made up my mind whether I shall not pull caps with you for the interesting invalid downstairs. I think I'm almost in love with *ses beaux yeux* myself ; and now that you have made him the possessor of a thousand a year for life, he would not be at all an unprofitable investment."

Miss Hetherington laughed heartily at this badinage, and made a move toward her own room.

"How are we going?" called her friend after her.

"I ordered the barouche for the Selwyns and you, Frank, and mean to drive Archie over in my pony chaise."

“Well, you see, the barouche is a little too high to be convenient him to step into, and I thought drove the chaise into the woods and the ponies taken out, he could rest during the day if he felt tired.”

“A very plausible excuse, dear will do as well as any other.”

“You’re a tease!” replied Felicia she left her.

As they all assembled before the of Cheshunt Hall, and Archibald Nasmyth found that Miss Hetherington intended to drive him herself, he rested with her.

“I thought you would have ridden horseback,” he said. “I know don’t care for driving, and you have ridden for days. It makes me feel self such a bother to you.”

“You can never be that!” answered in a low voice.

“Oh, dear Miss Hetherington, me drive Mr. Nasmyth!” exclaimed Mah Selwyn. “I can drive. I u

bald's society. "They are troublesome at times—at least Jill is, and if she begins to misbehave herself the other is sure to follow suit."

"Oh, yes, I'm sure I can—can't I, papa? I have a very strong wrist. They won't get the better of me, and if there was any chance of it, Mr. Nasmyth would be able to help me."

"I'm afraid you mustn't count on me for assistance," said Archibald, "for I'm as weak as a child since this confounded accident."

Felicia was very averse to the proposed arrangement, and felt nervous for the issue; but Mab pleaded so hard and was so positive that she could manage the ponies, that her hostess' scruples were overcome, and she re-entered the house to assume her riding-habit, and ordered her favorite hunter to be brought round.

Her riding gear set off her neat figure to the best advantage, and her horse was a magnificent animal, for which she had given £150; and as she rode by the side of the barouche Miss Cuthbert could not help looking at them both, and thinking how remarkably well they suited each other.

But she could not help remarking also how Felicia's eyes wandered incessantly to the pair in the pony chaise, and how anxiously she watched the action of the fiery little cobs, like a

called out once or twice, as she flourished the whip over the pony's ears, and made the volatile Jill swing her mane in a determined manner to try to get her head down. "Be careful, Mab, I entreat you. You don't know what that little brute Jill is when she gets her temper up."

"It's all right!" Miss Selwyn answered, as she bent down her own head to hear what Mr. Nasmyth might be saying.

But all of a sudden, when no one was expecting it, the little mare, with her temper excited, swerved at a place where a plowman who started up from the other side of the hedge, and getting the bit between her teeth, set off at a violent gallop, which her stable companion, Jack, contrived to turn into a runaway.

Mab gave a scream which made Cecilia look up. In a moment she saw what had happened, and before she could remark on it the pony chaise was out of sight.

to do?" said Fanny Cuthbert to the coachman.

"I think she's going to try and stop 'em at the Nutley Road, miss," he replied, touching his hat. "It's a short cut across them fields. But, begging your pardon, miss, the mistress didn't ought to have let that young lady drive them cobs. I seed she couldn't handle them, directly she took the reins. They're a caution sometimes, and no mistake, and I don't know no lady as can manage 'em like the mistress herself."

"But what can we do, coachman?" said Miss Cuthbert, in distress, which Mr. Selwyn naturally shared.

"We can't do nothink, miss, but drive on slowly, so as not to frighten 'em wuss. But I shall be very much surprised if they don't 'ave an accident! Howsomever, if it is to be stopped, the mistress will stop it, for she's the boldest lady I ever see back a hoss, and she'll cut 'em off at the end of the Nutley Road."

So the little party drove on, very anxious and uneasy until they reached their friends again.

Meanwhile, Felicia flew as fast as her hunter could carry her over the fields and dales that led to the Brierley Hills, leaping every obstacle that came in her way as if she had been a bird. But one thought was in her mind the while,

before she did and went down the stone road, both Mabel Selwyn Archibald Nasmyth might be dashed pieces in the pits.

Felicia shut her eyes as she contemplated so horrible a contingency; she never relaxed her speed. She knew her way well, for she had often traversed it while following the hounds. It was quite a short cut, hardly more than the distance of the road, and she confidently expected to reach the turn of the hills long before they did.

But she had not calculated on the speed of Jack and Jill when fairly upon their mettle. As she came into the highway she saw the little carriage flying down the slope that led to the sandstone quarries. With increased impetus she put her horse over the hedge, and flinging herself off his back stood right in the path of the carriage and seized them by the

Archibald might be thrown from the carriage and break another limb! Archibald might be hurled down those awful sandpits and lie a bleeding corpse at the bottom before she could step between to prevent the catastrophe.

So, without thought or care for herself, she let her own horse go where he would, while she seized the reins of the runaway steeds with her courageous hands, and was thrown down by them and trampled underfoot before their course was stayed.

"My God!" cried Archibald Nasmyth, as he got out as quickly as he was able and stooped over Felicia's bleeding body, "she has killed herself for us! Felicia," he continued, as he kissed her cheek, "Felicia, speak to me, for Heaven's sake! This suspense will kill me!"

The ponies had stopped by this time, very much out of breath, with heaving flanks and downcast heads, as if they were ashamed of themselves, while Felicia's hunter, like a well-bred gentleman, was standing meekly by and trying to crop a little grass to refresh himself after his late exertions.

Mab Selwyn, who had been ready to faint with fright, felt every other feeling swallowed up in surprise as she listened to Archibald Nasmyth's address to Felicia, but for the moment her fear for her hostess' safety was as great as his.

said ; " she may only have fainted from the shock ! But how her cheek is bleeding ! What shall we do ? "

Archibald Nasmyth, apparently oblivious of her presence, laid his face again to that of Miss Hetherington.

" Felicia ! Felicia ! " he cried, " wake up ! Speak to me ! Show some sign of life ! My God ! is it possible that she is dead ? "

" No, dear Archie, no ! " said Felicia faintly ; " I am not very much hurt, only a little stunned, I think. But you are safe, are you not ? You and poor Mab. Oh, what an awful time it was ! I thought you would have both been dashed to pieces down the sandstone quarries. "

Then she remembered that they were not alone and struggled to her feet with a huge blush.

" Are my ponies hurt ? " she asked.

" Not a bit, my little creatures "

"you are more hurt than you imagine. Let me help you to the carriage. The ponies are quiet again now. You will faint if you stand here. Oh, why did you do it?"

"I did it for you," she answered, in a low voice, as she supported herself by leaning on her horse's neck.

Mab had no time for wonderment then, but she heard and noted every word that passed between them.

"Here comes the barouche, dear Miss Hetherington," she exclaimed presently. "Oh, I hope papa won't be very angry with me for this."

"It was not your fault, dear," replied Felicia kindly.

She made as light of it as she possibly could, but when she was submitted to the scrutiny of Frances Cuthbert, who was pale with apprehension, it was soon found that she was unfit for anything but to be conveyed home again, and a great difficulty arose as to what to do with regard to the rest of the picnic party. The barouche was the only proper vehicle in which to take Felicia back to the Hall, and Archibald Nasmyth and Miss Cuthbert both elected to return with her.

Mr. Selwyn would not trust himself to Mab's tender mercies in the pony chaise, nor had the ambitious young lady any desire for a repetition of her exploit, so it was decided they must all

Waddington Woods, with Miss Waddington's compliments to her guests, and an explanation of how the *contré* had occurred.

When this was settled, the barouche set off on its homeward course. Felicia bore the motion unflinchingly, although everyone saw how much she suffered, and everyone sympathized more with the author of the mischief, Miss Selwyn.

She really seemed jealous of the attention her hostess commanded, and sat well back on her seat in the carriage, silent and sulky.

Felicia was not the sort of woman who would faint, but she had great difficulty in prevent herself doing so before she reached home, and as soon as they arrived Miss Cuthbert conveyed her to her own room, and the rest of the party were left to amuse themselves as they might. It was a glorious day, and as soon as luncheon was over Arcady Nasmyth took the stick with wh

herself for the share she had taken in the unfortunate accident that had happened to her hostess. Coming up with her he threw himself into a wicker chair beside her, and proceeded to administer comfort.

"Miss Cuthbert has just sent down a message to say," he commenced, "that Miss Hetherington feels better than she expected to do, and hopes to get off with the cut above her eye and a few bruises. It is a mercy it is not worse; but as it is I do not think we need have any more fears on her account."

"I was not thinking of Miss Hetherington," answered Mab, "though I should have been deeply grieved if anything worse had happened to her. But I was wondering if the shock would throw you back. Are you sure you don't feel any bad effects from it?"

"*I?*" responded the young man, opening his eyes. "Oh, dear, no! I was terribly frightened at the time, for her sake, but it has all passed with the assurance of her safety. It has rather done me good, I think. I did not know before that I was capable of jumping out of the carriage so quickly. I believe I could have jumped over a precipice at that moment."

His assertion seemed to ruffle Miss Selwyn.

"Yes. I observed you displayed unusual agility," she said somewhat sar-

Miss Hetherington.
Archie ! ' and ' Dearest Felicia !
give me for smiling, but it did
little funny to hear a young fellow
you calling an old woman like
Hetherington ' dearest ! ' "

" Did it ? " he replied, . cc
" Why ? "

Mab threw her head back in her
chair and turned her large brow
on him. She was looking uncom-
well that afternoon, for the July
had flushed her face, and her abundant
hair, which was somewhat in dis-
lay in masses on the shoulders of
pretty white gown.

As she looked at him her blush
struck Archibald Nasymth vividly
yet there was something in it that
him turn his eyes away.

" I don't know, " she said, in answer
to his question. " Because she is
enough to be your mother, I suppose.
She is a dear old thing ! I have known
her ever since I was a baby. but I
dreamed of . . . "

her quickly—his face flushing with surprise and curiosity.

"But that is nonsense," he replied confusedly ; "you are exaggerating the matter altogether ! I can imagine how sorry you would have been if either Miss Hetherington or myself had been injured, but her life is of far more consequence than mine."

"Is it?" said Mab carelessly. "To some people, perhaps, like Miss Cuthbert, who seems to worship her—but not to me."

"But it is to me," exclaimed Archie, loyally, "considering we are engaged to be married !"

He had not intended to let the cat out of the bag, but the words left his lips before he was aware of it.

Mab treated the news at first as if it was the greatest possible joke.

"Don't be silly," she cried, "and try to bamboozle me ! I am not so easily taken in as you seem to think. *You*—engaged to marry Miss Hetherington ! Why, you are young enough to be her son !"

"Not quite that, I think, Miss Selwyn ; but I assure you it is the truth. I ought not to have mentioned it, though. Miss Hetherington does not wish it to be made public yet, so you must be good enough to regard it as a confidence. Will you ?"

"But it isn't true. You are joking !

years old ! ”

Archibald Nasmyth did not know how to answer her badinage. It made him feel very uncomfortable, and it seemed dishonorable to keep silence upon the subject. Yet what could he say to this young woman, who continued to stare at him full in the face and laugh insolently.

“ Please don’t let us talk of that any more,” he resumed, after a pause. “ It is the truth, although you appear unable to believe it. Miss Hetherton has been very good to me. I don’t believe I should be alive now were it not for all the care she lavished on me when I was in the hospital. I can never forget all I owe her, nor can I ever hope to repay her.”

There was a long pause, during which he waited for Mab to make some answer to his speech, but none came. She remained sitting with her eyes fixed upon the sky—gazing apparently into the far distance.

interested to hear of it? It seems to me to be a thing to be rather ashamed of than otherwise."

"Don't say that," replied Archie, in a voice of pain.

"Do you mean to say that you love her?" said the girl, turning upon him with blazing eyes.

"Of course I love her," he answered gravely.

Mab gave a short, hard laugh, and rising from her seat sauntered away on the broad lawn to where a leafy acacia bent its branches to the ground so as to form a verdant bower. She parted the branches and passed behind them, losing herself from view. Archibald Nasmyth sat for a few moments where she had left him, uncertain what to do.

He was not quite sure what her manner of receiving his news portended, but it was certainly flattering to his vanity. And his prevailing weakness was his vanity, as it is that of most men. You have only to find out the vulnerable point in a man's armor to twist him at your will. The woman who does not flatter him stands no chance against the woman who does. Archie had been flattered on account of his personal beauty ever since he was a child, and he thought a great deal more of himself than he would ever allow. Miss Selwyn's evident annoyance at the announcement of his engagement put all

to the acacia bower.

He found her standing in a kind of reverie, plucking the green leaves handfuls and casting them impetuously to the ground. But as she saw that he had followed her, a smile rose to her lips, which she turned away in order to conceal from him.

"Miss Selwyn," he commenced abruptly, "I hope I have not said anything to offend you. Why did you leave me just now? What difference can what I have told you make to your pleasant friendship?"

He tried to take her hand, but she twitched it away.

"What nonsense! Of course it makes no difference. Only the first part of it is over—that's all."

"Over? But why?"

"Do you suppose we can go on with our collaboration, the same as if we were disengaged?—that I should ever proposed to commence it, unless I had thought you were free? And

wrong idea of Felicia. She is kindness itself, and would be only too glad to see me (or you, for the matter of that) succeed in anything we undertook. Besides, I must write for my living. You don't suppose I am going to sit down for the remainder of my life and spend her money, do you? I am not that sort of man, Miss Selwyn."

"Well, I hope Miss Hetherington may be interested in your literary career, but she never seems to me to care for anything but horses."

"You are mistaken. She not only takes a great interest in it, but has worked herself, for my benefit. It was through her means that I became acquainted with your father and yourself. That is a great thing I have to thank her for."

"I am glad you think so. A literary career wants all the help it can get. It is not a remunerative one, as a rule. You are a very lucky man, Mr. Nasmith, to have the road to success made so easy to you. It really will not signify whether you succeed or not."

"Oh, yes, it will! I shall be very unhappy if I do not succeed. It has been the ambition of my life to become a successful author, and I mean to be one before I die."

"I prophesy you will be no such thing. I think Miss Hetherington will object, after a while, to your shutting yourself

rather you spent your time with
believe I should say the same
similar circumstances. You see i
as if she were a girl like—me. S
not so much time to spare, poor
She will want to have as much c
company as she can, and who
blame her for it? It will be
natural. But you must relinquis
ambition!"

"I shall do no such thing,"
swered. "I have made up my m
the subject and everything else
succumb to its fulfillment. I am
ambitious than you give me cred
Miss Selwyn. I have grand idea
possibilities of elaboration in my
and I sincerely hope and believe t
which lies before me will aid inst
hindering me in their accomplishm

"Ah! you will forget me the
shall have no part in your life,"
Mab sentimentally.

"Indeed, I trust you will! D
suppose that means—"

could not overfill it. It embraces the whole world. Do you not agree with me?"

"Oh, what does it signify whether I agree or not?" said Mab pettishly. "You must learn to think and decide for yourself in the future."

"But I like to hear your ideas just as they occur to you."

"I am not so sure that you would, or that Miss Hetherington would approve of my telling them to you. I begin to be afraid I have been too open and free already. You see I had no idea—I had not the slightest conception—how should I have?"—said the girl, with just the faintest suspicion of a falter in her voice, "that you were—were engaged to be married—above all, that you were engaged to *her*. I must say that I don't think it was quite fair to keep it a secret."

"But why not fair? My accident is of such recent date that it is not certain when the marriage can take place, so we decided not to make the news public till the day was actually fixed. How can that concern anybody but ourselves?"

"It might hurt some other people very much indeed," replied Mab significantly; and he was just about to make some eager rejoinder when Miss Cuthbert was descried coming toward them over the lawn.

“You will be glad to hear,” she commenced, “that my dear has fallen into a nice sleep. It is terribly cut and bruised, as various parts of her body; Galloway, who has just left, says week in bed will set her right. she will always carry the mark of the accident; but we must all feel that and you especially, Miss Selwyn did not result in her death, as I easily have done.”

“Well, I don’t see that it was my rejoined Mab. “No one can with a really vicious animal. Hetherington should not drive horses. They are not safe!”

“Evidently not—in your I replied Miss Cuthbert, “and I will be a warning to you not to attempt to do a thing of which you are not competent. You might have saved Mr. Nasmyth’s life, as well as you to say nothing of that of my dear. It has been a most merciful escape.”

bert ; she was most plucky. It was the pluckiest thing I have ever seen—everyone who saw it must feel that," he replied confusedly, but truth to say, he was wondering all the while what Miss Selwyn could possibly have meant by saying that it was not fair of Miss Hetherington and him to have kept their engagement a secret.

CHAPTER VII.

THE ATTRACTION.

MEANWHILE, poor Felicia was lying in her bed, bruised from head to foot. The cut above her eye was a deep, disfiguring wound, which had nearly reached the bone, and which Dr. Galloway had found necessary to draw together with a few stitches.

Felicia had asked him at the time if it would leave a scar, and he had answered soothingly that there might be a slight mark, but it would be nothing to signify. But to Miss Cuthbert he had said that she would be scarred for life, and lucky if the wound healed without discoloration. As for the rest of the poor creature, there was not a bone in her body that did not ache.

The horses' feet trampled on her chest and bosom, and they had only

mischance.

Mab had been careless, poor
That was the worst of her
She thought she could drive,
never would have attempted to

As for the darling little cobs, they
never bolted in their lives
Something quite out of the
must have frightened them—
is more paralyzing than fear? It
how good and sweet they were
have trampled her to death. I
sure the dear things had recognized
effort she was making for them
and stopped their career by alms-
house means.

No one was to be blamed, it
she to be pitied. She was only too
ful and happy to think she had
plished her object and saved her
from a terrible fate. She would
acknowledge that she felt any pain
least any to speak of,—though she
not turn in bed for the agony
bruised body and she was still

had at present. But, naturally, Miss Cuthbert refused to leave her.

Poor Felicia, with her head bound up in white cloths, and the only part of her face visible blue and purple with bruises, and swollen to twice its natural size, did not look any the handsomer for her accident. Indeed, she presented such a pitiable object that Miss Cuthbert felt almost thankful that she could not leave her bed, as she felt sure that in that case she would have gone downstairs, bandages and all, to look after the well-being of Mr. Archibald Nasmith. Her whole anxiety was that he should be well cared for during her absence, and she put all sorts of questions to Miss Cuthbert as to how he seemed and what he said, and how much he had eaten, and if he had made any complaint.

"Don't think me childish, dear Frank," she would say, glancing up into her friend's face with the eye that was not hidden by bandages, "but I am longing so to hear all about him. We are quite alone, dear ! There is no one to hear us talk, so do tell me every little thing about Archie that you can remember. Will you ?"

"Of course I will, dear Felix, but where shall I begin ? He looks the same as ever to me ! I think he ate a tolerably good breakfast, too, this morning."

to Welham Court this morning the Poynders' call ; and I th must have stayed to lunch t they have not returned yet."

"Oh, I am so glad ! It wi Archie. He must feel lonely am up here. I would have good deal for it not to have h just for that reason. Are Mab going on with their story ?"

"I believe so," replied Miss C with closed lips ; "at least they ha a writing room of the acacia bo carry all their materials out the

"Oh, what a pretty idea claimed Felicia unaffectedly. sure that must have been dear because it is so poetical. As Frank—does he ever speak of n

"He always inquires after y ling ; but you must not forget tl engagement to him is not made yet, and I have no opportunities ing him alone. He is very anx

present, you know? I do so long to see him for a moment!"

Miss Cuthbert looked at the poor, discolored, swollen features; at the bandaged head, and wondered if Felicia knew what she looked like, and what the young man would think of her if he were admitted to her presence.

"There would be nothing improper in it, my dear friend, that I can see," she answered, "but you are hardly fit to receive company. You look rather alarming at present, my dear. I think it would be advisable to wait a little longer."

"But Archie—it could not signify to Archie, surely," she persisted. "He and I have promised to pass the rest of our lives together. No disfigurements can make any difference to him and me. Why, if he had been smashed all to pieces it would only make me more anxious to be by his bedside. What odds could it be how he looked, so long as he wanted to see me? I don't think you realize how much I love him, Frank!"

"Yes, dear, I do; but men and women are of different natures. They think more of our appearance than we do of theirs. You can do as you like, of course, Felix, but if I were you I would wait until my bandages were off, before I asked for an interview with Mr. Nasmyth."

They had hoped at first that have been downstairs in a few days, but the bruises proved stinate than the wound, and were longer in healing. Felicia was a young woman, and she was a heavy one, and so the doctor would not hear of her leaving her bedroom. As she had lost the extreme stiffness, she succeeded the accident. There was a longing to be downstairs in the beautiful summer weather, and to look at her flowers and in her stables, but she was forced to lie idle for fear of having a serious result from her misadventure.

Meanwhile, Archibald Nasr and Mabel Selwyn were collaborating on the little story. Every morning they had their table and chairs carried into the acacia bower, and sat there with their heads close together, poring over their writing materials. The tale, which had been conceived with the view of being accepted by a magazine, had

remember, we had just got to the part where Lilla Mostyn is trying to analyze her feelings with regard to Allan McHeith :

“ ‘ Lilla sat at the open window with her head resting pensively on her hand. Did she love Allan or did she not? That was the question. She knew that she had a tender regard for him. His goodness to the poor paralytic, his filial devotion to his parents, and his unflinching honesty and rectitude, all went to make up an estimable and praiseworthy character. She loved him,—Lilla felt sure of that,—but did she love him enough to marry him? She recalled an incident of long ago, when Farrer Blake had shown her some attention——’ ”

“ Stop ! ” cried Mabel, when Archie had reached this point of the narrative, “ I think we should put in some discursive remarks there, on the different kinds of love there are in this world. An inexperienced person might so easily mistake his or her own feelings.”

“ That is a good idea,” said Archie ; “ let us enumerate them.”

“ Well, there’s the love that springs from attachment, and that which is evoked by gratitude, and that which comes of contiguity,—when there is really no one else to fall in love with ; and then the love which is born of

young man admiringly. "You have twice the experience that I am afraid I should never have of making an analysis of love in any way."

"Perhaps I have more observation, Mr. Nasmyth; or have had more reason to think of the subject."

"Why, has anybody proposed to you of whose capability to make you were not sure?" rejoined he, laughing.

"Of course not. What nonpareils are talking! Do you forget that I am only nineteen? Besides, I am not the sort of girl to let a man go so far as to propose to me before I knew anything about him. I shall not care for his first love, or not at all. I can love a second time. It would be a pleasure in my eyes."

"Then I sincerely hope that your first love will be worthy of you," rejoined her companion heartily.

been deceived in such a beautiful thing as love ! ”

“ You may be right, Miss Selwyn. Miss Hetherington told me that the reason her friend, Miss Cuthbert, has not married is, because she was engaged, when young, to a man she loved very much, and he died before the wedding day arrived. Yet she is very cheerful ! She lives in his memory and the prospect of meeting him again.”

“ Oh, don't mention Miss Cuthbert to me ! ” exclaimed Mab quickly. “ I hate the woman ! She makes me sick ! ”

Archibald Nasmyth looked up surprised at this outburst. He had no idea from whence it emanated. Fanny Cuthbert had always been civil and pleasant spoken to him.

“ Can't you see what a prying, meddling busybody she is ? ” went on Mab excitedly ; “ always poking her nose about to see what she can discover. Why she never leaves us in peace for ten minutes together, but she must come out into the garden to see what we are about. It is impossible to write, if one is to be constantly interrupted in this way. Why doesn't she keep to herself and her bosom friend ? I hate her, I tell you, and she will make mischief yet, mark my words.”

“ She can't do that unless we give her the opportunity,” replied Archie ; “ and we have never done that, have we ? ”

Archibald Nasmyth glanced at her, and found her eyes fixed on him. He smiled and held out his hand.

"My brave little *collaborateur*," said, as their palms met, "we must do anything to spoil the pleasant of *camaraderie* that we have now would be a terrible loss to me,—and I say to both of us?—if we were pelled to break up our companion and abandon our work. I have been looking forward to its lasting for—perhaps a lifetime. And with regard to Miss Cuthbert, I think you must be mistaken. She hovers about us a good deal, it is true; but perhaps it is for the pleasure of our company. She cannot be so suspicious of evil where none exists."

"All right," answered Mab; "at the same time, I don't like her! But let us go on with our analysis. Let me ask you: Where were we? 'But did she love him enough to marry him?' I shall go on something in this way: 'There are so many different kinds of love'

gratitude—that is doubtless sometimes very deep, and emanates from a worthy feeling. But it feeds entirely upon itself, and the benefits that excite it are like a cold douche of water thrown on a heated skin. The sense of obligation is apt to oppress after a while, and then the love that is only grateful must expire under the weight of it. Love, to be perfect, must give as well as receive. The mutual attraction that begets love is like a wave of warmth and light and electricity that passes from one to the other, and fills both hearts with the fullness of content. This is the only love that grows by what it feeds upon, that will increase and multiply as the years roll on—the love which the Creator intended should culminate in marriage.’ Of course I have put it very roughly, Mr. Nasmyth,” concluded Mab, “but that is the sort of thing I think we should say, don’t you?”

She raised her eyes as she concluded and met his fixed upon her in speechless admiration.

“Why, you are a genius,” he said. “You put me to shame. I should never have thought of drawing such a definition. You surprise me with the rapidity of your ideas and the way in which you clothe them with language. If this is your usual style of composition, you will leave me far behind. I have to grind at an idea for hours before I feel able to

yourself. You make me feel as if I were here on false pretenses."

"Oh, no ! I couldn't write it as well myself," retorted Mab. "Your presence inspires me ! It brings the thought to use. In fact, they seem to emanate from you to me. The question is, whether I shall ever be able to do anything by myself again."

"I don't see why you should, as long as I live ; that is to say, if you really mean what you say," replied the young man. "Let us make a compact to work together, as Rice and Besant did, from this time forward. The advantage would be all on my side, I know, but it would make me very happy if I thought I was always to have you for my *laborateur*."

"Oh, no, no !" exclaimed Mab ; "it would be very foolish. It would be very foolish. It would never do. I could

There was no mistaking her meaning, though her look said more than her words, as she leaned both her arms across the table, and laid her head sideways upon them. The young man's heart caught fire from hers at once. He threw one arm round her waist and brought his burning cheek in close proximity to hers.

"Ah, Mab!" he cried, "don't talk of forsaking me; you will take all the zest out of my work if you do. How delightfully these weeks have passed! How pleasant it has been to work together; all the labor disappearing under the excitement of comparing our ideas, and consulting what we should keep in and what eliminate. Would you send me to a dull task alone, and lose half your powers, as you say you will, at the same time?"

"Not if I could help it," returned the girl, who had clasped the hand he had put round her waist and held it tight in hers. "But the very fact that it is so delightful should warn us of its danger. It *is* a bit dangerous, Archie, don't you agree with me!" she added archly.

"Heaven knows it is," he answered fervently; "but I must brave it, even though it led me to my death. Mab, promise not to desert me. Let us continue friends and fellow-workers. Your genius will inspire me, as nothing else could have the power to do. Let us

Archibald frowned.

"Why do you bring her name to this moment, which I was dedicating to you? What would she say? that I was quite right in doing any that would advance me in my position. I am placed in rather an unpleasant position, Mab, at least one that is galling to my pride. If Miss Herington had a quarter of her fortune, she should be much better satisfied. I am a proud man, and cannot bear the thought that people will say I am marrying for her money: and I had no other thought in my head, I assure you. I am quite determined that no woman shall make me give up my profession. And if marriage is in addition to deprive me of my friends, I shall be even more miserable."

"But, still, Archie," observed Selwyn, who had not disengaged

or all of them, if it pleased you better, and the world—good old world!—might say just what it liked. But we are not free, you see; and we are rather young, Archie, and—and—not bad-looking, either of us,—or so people say,—so I'm afraid we might not come off scot free, if we saw too much of each other, which would be very sad for both of us. Don't you think so?"

"By Jove, I don't know what I think," exclaimed the young man excitedly, "except that you are the most distractingly fascinating little girl that I have ever come across!"

And he bent down his mouth in an attempt to kiss her, as he spoke. But Miss Selwyn drew herself away, modestly.

"No, no, that will never do! and you are a naughty boy to dream of it. We can be very good friends without that sort of thing, sir. It is not in the slightest degree necessary."

"That is your idea, is it?" answered Archie discontentedly.

"It is; and a very good one," said Mab, as she jumped up from her seat.

"Come along, Mr. Archie, and let us gather a bouquet of flowers for Miss Hetherington. Have you sent her up any this morning?"

"No, I haven't. You drove it out of my head," replied the young man.

"Oh, I like that—putting your sins on to poor me! I'll make you pay for

would if you would let me . . .
frighten me when you talk of running
away from me."

"Well, if you'll be very good, perhaps I won't. But I was joking about the basket. You rest under the trees while I get the flowers, and I will come and sit by you when I make them up. I would not have you tire your poor legs for any earthly consideration. You don't know how much I think of it. I would give one of my own legs to rest yours."

"And I would have the other cut to insure such sweet sympathy," said Archie; "but I am quite equal to trotting after you. Don't insist upon sitting down. You will go round the trees where I shall not see you, and then all the sunshine will seem to have vanished and I be left in the dark alone."

"How poetical," laughed Mab. "I think you must have mistaken your vocation, and are cut out for a poet. I shall set you some day to write a sonnet."

lying helpless on my bed, and said 'Rise up and walk,' I should have done so from the sheer force of sympathy between us!"

"What a pity I was not there," she laughed merrily, "or that Miss Hetherington did not think of using the potent spell. You must be getting well, indeed, Archie, if you feel you can afford to make jokes on your recent misfortune."

"On the contrary, it strikes me I am getting more sick every day," said young Nasmyth.

Mab opened her big eyes at him. She wanted to urge him on to confess that it was her fascination over him that made him sick, and probably would have accomplished her object, had not Fanny Cuthbert been seen at that moment coming toward them.

"Here comes my enemy! Didn't I tell you she never left us for half an hour by ourselves?" exclaimed Mab, as she dived behind a large bush of syringa.

"Mr. Nasmyth," said Fanny Cuthbert, going up straight to him, "Dr. Galloway has permitted Felicia to move into her boudoir to-day, and she is very anxious to see you. I have tried to persuade her to put off the interview for a few days longer, but she has proved a refractory patient. Will you come at once, as I am not sure how long she will be able to bear the exertion of leaving her bed."

I take your flowers to her at the same time?"

"Oh, yes!" replied Mab, coming forward, "and will you give her my very best love and a thousand kisses and tell her how I miss her, and how I hope she will very soon be downst again. Now, you won't forget, you?" she added, with a winning smile.

"No, I will not forget," he answered gravely, as he accompanied Miss C. to the house.

"Mr. Nasmyth," she said, stopping at the foot of the stairs, "you must be prepared to see dear Felicia looking a great object. The effect of the bruise is most disfiguring. Her face, too, is so knocked about, that it is twice its usual size, and will not go down, the doctor says, for several days yet. She is so thoroughly free from all self-consciousness, that she does not care about her personal appearance; but it is distressing to those who love her. I must go now, in private, some

"Miss Hetherington only did me justice in that," replied Archibald, "for no personal disadvantage could have any effect on the deep esteem and respect in which I hold her. I am very glad to find that she stands on no ceremony with me."

His conscience was already pricking him for the action he had observed toward Mab Selwyn, and he felt anxious to do something to eradicate the remembrance of it from his mind. But though he had been prepared to find a great alteration in Felicia Hetherington, he had hardly realized how fearfully the accident had disfigured her. She was dressed in her usual style and lying on a sofa when he entered the room, but her face was almost unrecognizable.

The cut in her forehead, from which the stitches had been removed, was now plastered together with strips of diachylon; on one cheek was a deep purple bruise, streaked with blotches of yellow and green; her lip had been cut and was still swollen, and the injured eye was almost closed.

Her heavenly smile alone remained to poor Felicia, and even the effect of that was marred by its surroundings.

Archibald Nasmyth sunk on one knee on the footstool near her couch, and raised the hand she proffered him to his lips. He even made an attempt to kiss her face, but she waved him off.

to see you like this: no more.
"I had no idea you had been so injured! And to think that you for us, too. It was too brave—too ing—of you. You might have yourself!"

He had linked Mab and together, without perceiving it, Alicia did.

"I am afraid it was of no use to you that I thought, Archie," she said, "though, of course, I should never forgive myself if anything happened to the child of my old friend. How is the poor little girl? I blame herself at all? You must not to do so, Archie, for it was not her fault but mine, for letting her go free reins."

"She is very much concerned about her illness, as we all are," he answered, "but I agree with you, that it is not her fault. Every driver is subject to these accidents at times. I have the best whips smash their tra-

interposed Frances Cuthbert, with some asperity, for she hated the name of Mabel Selwyn. "I know enough of driving to see that she is even ignorant how to handle the reins. Her blatant vanity made her want to show off, and she nearly killed you both in consequence. I shall not forgive her for it in a hurry!"

Archibald Nasmyth forgot himself for the instant and fired up in Mab's defense.

"You do her injustice, Miss Cuthbert. I assure you," he retorted warmly, "Mab—I mean Miss Selwyn—is as distressed as any of us at the turn of affairs. She offered to drive in order that Felicia might ride, and she has had a good deal of experience. Something frightened the cobs,—there is no accounting for these things,—and they would have been as unmanageable in the hands of the strongest man as in hers!"

"I don't believe it," replied Miss Cuthbert shortly.

"Frank, dear!" pleaded Felicia, "do not let us say anything more about it, pray! It is all over and done with. Let us thank God it is no worse!"

"Of course, everyone is right but yourself, Felicia," said her friend.

"Nay, dear, but Archie feels with me, I am sure, that the less said about it the better, and especially as Mabel is a guest in the house. Speak to me of

here, dear, that we must try—after
tember, you know—to persuade
come and live at the Hall with
you think she would consent, and
that it would make her happy
that is the main thing. Of course
she is used to the attendance of
cousin, her cousin could come
she would do so. But we must come
out of our abundance, try to make
mother's life happier. That must be
our first consideration, and then
be left to her own choice. You
mother, who brought you into the
Archie, how much I seem to owe
Only second to what I owe you
ing brought such sunshine into
life. It makes me laugh to my
people commiserate me for being
for a few days, when I remember
blessings I have to think of.
as if I hadn't had time, amid
amusement and pleasure to va

serves," said the young man. "I am the only one who should speak of gratitude. And now you have added another favor to your many previous ones, by risking your life for me. I am overwhelmed with obligation to you."

"No, don't say that, Archie! It sounds as if we were strangers to each other still; and we are friends, remember,—true and honest friends,—as we promised to be. And from that moment not only all my worldly goods became yours, but my life and everything that appertains to it. My joy is even yours, Archie, and I would lay that down if it would give you any more happiness."

"I believe you would," he said, as he stooped and kissed her softly on her hair; "but I trust it will never be required of you."

And he left her presence, feeling rather ashamed, and full of high resolves that he would never allow himself again to be betrayed into a flirtation with Miss Mabel Selwyn, or anybody else.

And as he reached the foot of the staircase he was met by Mab herself, with her red lips parted in a smile, and a rosebud to put in his buttonhole.

THE DISCOVERY.

ARCHIBALD NASMYTH
muned a good deal with heart that night, and the resolution not to collaborate with Mabel Selwyn until Felix come downstairs again. In quence of which he established in the library the next morning breakfast, and with papers and zines settled down for a couple of reading. Miss Selwyn was not finding him out. She peeped door armed with her writing-campstool.

"Hollo, Master Lazy!" playfully, "what are you doing? Are not newspapers and stories forbidden until we have done our work? Get your portfolio and come with me, before papa comes for a ramble in the woods."

"Go for your ramble, Miss Selwyn," answered "and enjoy it."

ously," she pouted. "I was only in fun. I never imagined you were going to break your engagement to me. I have been thinking out that last difficulty all night, and am quite ready to go on with the chapter."

"Cannot it wait for a little while?" asked Archie. "I have rather a headache this morning, and would be glad to rest. I think the sun must have touched my head yesterday. It was very strong."

"Oh, that is nonsense!" retorted Mab rudely. "How could the sun get to you through all those leaves? Besides, you won't be more tired sitting out there than in here,—indeed, less,—so get your hat, like a good boy, and come along."

"Then, if it was not the sun, perhaps I exhausted my brains," said the young man, laughing; "for I don't feel as if I had an idea in my head to-day! You must excuse me, Mab,—I mean Miss Selwyn,—for I should be of no use to you. I am fit for nothing but to sit still and be quite."

And Archie returned to the perusal of his newspaper.

The girl stood in the open doorway for a minute, irresolute. She perceived the alteration in her companion's manner, and she partly guessed the cause. It was some absurd scruple of conscience which had got hold of him. The belief

only known to, she did
attract any man unless he
some other woman. There
and excitement in an easy
she averred. But from the
had seen Archibald Nasmy
determined to conquer him
quered he should be. So
the doorway, looking as if
she knew how, and pouted
pointed child.

"You are tiresome!" she
ently, with drooping lips.
in the humor to write to-
bursting with ideas, and
throw cold water on them
can people collaborate if
give in to one another?
morrow, when you may be
for composition, I may find
have a toothache. But do
I should be so selfish as to
over, or run the risk of

But have you forgotten what you said to me yesterday about the danger of such constant companionship? I have been considering your words and have come to the conclusion you are right. Added to which, it may excite remark. So I think it will be better to put off our next meeting for a day or two!"

"I suppose Miss Hetherington 'hauled you over the coals' when you went up to see her yesterday afternoon," suggested Mabel derisively.

"Indeed, you are mistaken. She never mentioned the subject, except to inquire how the story was getting on. I don't think she is given to hauling anyone over the coals. She is not a scold by any manner of means. And I trust she has nothing to scold me for. At least I feel quite innocent."

"And so do I," laughed Mab, though she mentally added, "She shall have a cause before long, or my name is not Mab Selwyn! And so you are really not coming out to-day?" she continued aloud to Archibald Nasmyth.

"No, not to-day!" he echoed, and after a moment's lingering to see if he would change his mind, the girl walked slowly away.

He had been very brave and resolute, he told himself, and he would surely have his reward. He would keep quiet for the best part of the day, and in the cool evening, when the elders had

their ideas on literature and
their hopes for the future to
But Mab did not intend to let
easily. He had offended her
refusing her request of this
and she meant him to suffer

She kept aloof from him
remainder of the day, and
sauntered on the lawn in the
fully expecting she would
bear him company, she sat in
ing room with her father, reading
lamplight, and never raised her
Archie wistfully passed at
the open French window.
seem to the young man as if
brought its own reward that
he manfully held to his resolve
to occupy the acacia bower,
were so entirely private and
Felicia was downstairs and
them, or sit near them, while

Mab only asked him one
day whether he had altered
and receiving an answer in

our collaboration, Mr. Nasmyth. I think you are tired of it, or you fancy it will not succeed; in which case it will be better to give up all idea of continuing it at once."

Archie was taken aback at being so suddenly called upon to make up his mind. He had entertained no idea of relinquishing his collaboration with Mab Selwyn—only of avoiding the temptation of being so much alone with her, while Felicia kept her room. He stammered as he replied:

"My final resolution, Miss Selwyn? I thought we had quite made up our minds it was to continue, so long as we could make it pay."

"So did I; but this is not the way to make it pay. This is the third day you have given up work, and if you can't go on, I must."

"But you know the reason——" he began hesitatingly. "I thought we agreed—at least you said——"

"Oh, yes, I know what I said," exclaimed Mab, interrupting him, "and I meant what I said, into the bargain. But that is not the question. If you are game enough to risk it, so am I. But if we are to go on with our writing, we must go on, and if not, we must leave off. I can't afford to wait about in this way, doing nothing!"

"But Felicia will be down again to-morrow, or next day," said Archie.

have observed her, since you mention it, and I can see how she watches us. I am sure it will be wiser to defer our writing till Felicia can be with us."

Mab curled her lip in disdain for her pusillanimity.

"Now, look here!" she commenced. "I can't stand this sort of thing any longer. I am writing for my bread and butter, and cannot afford to wait till Miss Hetherington comes downstairs to chaperon us. It may be very well for you, who will have more money than you know what to do with in a month or two; but what is sport to you may be death to me. I have laid off writing a tale for the *Traveller* : which I was to receive a fixed payment expressly so that I might write the tale with you, and if you can't go with it, and at once, I must take to my own work again. Papa was asking me, only yesterday, when it was to be finished. I wanted a few shillings for my dress and he was as nasty as

the last few days, and when I told him it was your wish to delay it for a while, he said if you were undependable I must go on by myself, and that he was afraid you were only going to be a *dillettanté* after all, for an earnest worker would never let anything short of incapability interfere with what he had in hand."

She knew she had used the weapon that would rouse him.

"Mr. Selwyn called me a *dillettanté*, did he?" he exclaimed, rising from his seat. "I'll soon show him if I am a *dillettanté* or not. Come, Mab, let us go back to work at once! I am just as eager for it as you are, and only held back by prudent considerations; but we will risk everything rather than incur such a suspicion. But you mustn't come too close to me, you little witch! You must sit on the other side of the table, where there is no chance of our unlucky hands coming in contact."

"But then you'll see my eyes!" said Mab, delighted at having gained her point.

"By Jove! so I shall; and they're the most dangerous weapons you possess! Well, I suppose I'm doomed to be placed in the thick of the battle. Pray Heaven I may come out unscathed!"

Mab only laughed again. She knew he was scathed already.

so bad if anyone should ren
You have your writing-case,
my portfolio is behind the
Here is an inkstand apiece for
we can go comfortably to wo

"You cannot get over you
Archie," said Mab; "you are
particular young man I e
across."

"Only for your sake," he w
as they drew their chairs to
"I should be wretched if anyo
to say a word against you."

Mab tossed her head.

"You needn't be afraid of
know quite well how to take
myself. Now, where did we l
wretched Lilla the last time we
her? I declare it is such a l
ago that I almost forget. Oh,
though. I'm to sit on the oth
the table. I am a great deal
to you."

She was about to move h
when Archie said:

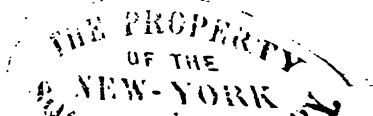
content, and the collaboration proceeded as before. Archibald Nasmyth made no further objections to the acacia bower, so sometimes it was carried on indoors, and sometimes out. And day by day he fell deeper and deeper into the mesh that Mab Selwyn had prepared for him.

He continued to pay his formal attentions to his hostess and *fiancée*, writing her a little note of kindly inquiry in the mornings and carrying her up a bouquet of flowers to adorn her boudoir in the afternoons.

But Felicia saw a great difference in the young man on these occasions. He seemed far more silent and depressed than he used to be; but to all her tender questions as to the cause, he had nothing to answer, except that he was longing for the time when she would come downstairs again.

Felicia would speak of these little interviews to Fanny Cuthbert with a trembling happiness that was almost painful to behold for such who knew how seldom earthly happiness ever lasts.

"Frank, dear," she would say with a soft smile, "Archie seems to be fretting sadly over my absence. I am afraid he must find it dull with you and me upstairs and only the Selwyns to entertain him. Isn't it strange that a young fellow like that—only twenty-four on his last birthday—should care for an old



“5” “What has Mr. Nasmyth do
would rather ask, Felix, to win s
heart as yours? You are too hum
you always have been! Most p
would say he was the luckiest y
man they had ever heard of. To
woman like you for his wife and t
into such a property as this for the
ing. Why, there are hundreds of
who would be too thankful to find t
selves in his shoes, I can tell you!

“Nothing that I can give him v
be enough to repay him for all th
he has brought into my life,” re
Felicia. “Why, Frank, I cannot
you what the assurance of his lov
done for me. You call me ‘hun
You wouldn’t say so if you could
my thoughts when I lie here an
member that Archie loves me—the
with his marvelous beauty, and
youth and clever brain, should sto
love my poor plain face and thi
beautiful, as he has told me, jus

cold water to my parched lips; as if I had been shut out from the sights and sounds of heaven all my life, and suddenly a beautiful sweet-scented rose, quivering with the early dew, was thrust beneath my nose, while a strain of perfect music sounded in my ears and filled my whole being with melody. That is how I think of my Archie and his love for me! Do you wonder still if it seems too good to be true?"

"You are a silly old woman," replied her friend jestingly, though the tears stood in her eyes. "I was always afraid that if ever you fell in love, Felix, you would throw all your heart and soul into it. But you must try to look at the thing in a reasonable light and one more fitted to your age and mine. You are too sensible not to know that love does not always last, even when its object is young and beautiful. Don't build too much, then, my dear old friend, on the eternity of either your feelings or Mr. Nasmyth's, or else you may be bitterly disappointed. I know you will think me a brute, but I must speak what I feel!"

"Yes, yes, of course!" said Felicia, with somewhat of a dismayed air. "I know some people are unfaithful to each other, but I can't think that of Archie, and my love will never fail him, Frank, never, never!"

"I am sure of that,—of your own will,

it must go," replied poor Felicia, and she closed her eyes to prevent tears from stealing through her eyelids.

She did not speak again, but Cuthbert saw her lips moving silently in prayer, and she knew the poor girl was praying her Heavenly Father that the cup might pass from her, and her lover's love be preserved to her lonely and desolate life.

From that moment Felicia appeared very impatient to get downstairs, and she was so rapidly regaining strength that Dr. Galloway gave her leave to do as she liked in the matter. She told Archibald Nasmyth, who had paid her the usual afternoon visit, that she had decided to make her first day, by taking an afternoon drive.

"And you will come with me, Archie, I hope," she said in conclusion.

Miss Cuthbert did not like the man's hesitation in answering her. There were many things that

Felicia; "how can you talk so? You must know my greatest pleasure in getting well again is the anticipation of enjoying your society. It has been a dull time up here without you, dear."

"I suppose it has," he answered simply, without apparently a thought of echoing the sentiment on his own part.

"Archie," resumed Felicia presently, "do you remember the compact we made the day we became engaged—that we were never to have a concealment from each other, but be the most honest, true, and faithful friends? We agreed, you know, my dear, that that was the only reliable basis for happiness in a relationship like ours, and that if we had any trouble or perplexity, we were to confide it without fear."

"I remember," said Archie, growing very red, "what of it?"

"Have you kept your compact with me, dear?"

"Why, certainly," he replied, growing still more confused. "What makes you think otherwise, Felicia?"

"Only, that I cannot help feeling that you are not *quite* the same, Archie! I cannot tell you where the difference lies, but it is there. And I thought, perhaps, you might be in some little difficulty or distress; that you had heard bad news, perhaps, of your mother, and did not like to tell me for fear of making me worse. But I am quite well

There is nothing, I .
You are utterly mistake
Archie, stammering over
word. "I am as well as p
I have heard nothing but
mother; indeed, she seems
she has been for a long
cousin writes word that she
monly pleased with the han
sents you sent her, and
enough of your unexpecte
and generosity. She has b
the Bath chair several
summer. Think what a cl
alone must be for a poor i
has been lying in bed, or ne
it, for twenty years. I sh
surprised at anything now;
hear she has been walking fo
or so, just for a little exercise
"I am so glad it has prov
to her," said Felicia; "bu
what then is the cause of

dear, I know there is something the matter, so the sooner you tell me, the sooner it will be over!"

"Indeed and indeed, Felicia, you have found a mare's nest. If I have anything to worry myself about it is the knowledge of how unworthy I am of all your solicitude for me. I am quite well and quite happy. Will that satisfy you?"

"It ought, oughtn't it?" said Felicia, with a wistful look.

But that evening she put a design that had entered her head into execution. Archie, she felt sure, was fretting because of her absence, and she would give him a joyful surprise. She was altogether so well and cheerful, walking briskly about her room and making fun of everything she came across, that she persuaded Fanny Cuthbert to go out after the late dinner and pay a long promised call on a friendly neighbor who lived close by the Hall.

"Well, as this is the last day of your imprisonment, Felix, I really will go," replied Miss Cuthbert, "for when you are downstairs again I shall want to go about with you. Do you want another book, dear, or is the last still unfinished?"

"Oh, I have more than enough to last me for this evening," said Felicia, with a smile, for she meant to spend it with her friends in the drawing room, and

notwithstanding all the
of Warrender, proceeded
She felt rather weak and
descended them, but she
soon as she put her head
drawing room door Archie
would be proffered for her
and Mab would rush forward
chair and footstool for her.

How pleased, too, her old
Selwyn, would be to see her
must have missed their talk
together very much.

Felicia felt quite excited
them this little surprise, and
herself how they would welcome
return among them. But
reached the drawing room,
lamps were lighted, it was
The grand piano stood open
Mab had been singing to
friends, and on a table was
with the empty cups and saucers
they had left behind their
guests had gone.

the drawing room, for I can steal upon them in the dusk so that they shall not know I am near till I can touch them."

She retraced her steps with all the simple pleasure of a child who is about to call "Boh!" behind one's back in the dark, and stepped out upon the lawn.

It was a very beautiful one, planted at intervals with clumps of flowering shrubs. Two grand mulberry and walnut trees reared their stately heads in the center, and sheltered a dozen wicker chairs and tables, while beds of rhododendrons, azalias and other shrubs ornamented the outskirts of it, to say nothing of the famous acacia bower which has played so important a part in Felicia's story.

It was now nine o'clock, and although the August air was almost sultry, the night was dark. The bats were wheeling round in airy circles, the white night-moths were fluttering over the sleeping flowers, and the falling dew made every green thing smell like new-mown hay.

But there was not a sound to be heard. Felicia strained her ears to catch her friend's voices in vain. But she was determined to find them, so she wrapped her shawl closer round her head and walked out among the flowers.

She felt sure they could not be far off. They had wandered into the shrubberies, or toward the young planta-

the wicker chairs,
something white b
which must surely
frock. They were
gether. She woul
there.

She was right.
drew nearer and ne
slowly, until Mab S
bald Nasmyth passed
which she sat, robed
gown, and seated th
front of her.

She, never dreaming
have anything to say to
she might not hear, wait
silence for the supreme
she should rush forward
them.

But the first words
Archie's lips made all th
of her face, drove the si
lips, and kept her trans
seat, unable to cry out, or
them know that

say that I like you a little in return you declare you are miserable!"

"But can't you understand me, Mab? I don't mean that I am miserable because you love me, because you have allowed me to kiss your dear lips, and to lie with my head where it would always be, above your beating heart; but because I cannot do such things with honor; because I must either suffer the loss of them or deceive Felicia—and *that* I must not do!"

"You are vastly particular, Archie! I wonder how many young fellows go and tell the woman they are going to marry everything they do—particularly when she is old enough to be your mother! Is Miss Hetherington so silly as to suppose that she will keep you all to herself for the rest of her life? Why, even girls don't expect that! They know better in this nineteenth century of what the love of men is made! They take the goods the gods provide them in the present, and don't look too far into the future!"

"But, darling, you are mistaken if you think my love for you is made of such slight material as that. It is so real and strong that I feel I must have you all to myself, or not at all. You have upset all my theories about love. I used to laugh at people calling it a madness, and believed I should never so far let go of my self-control as to let love

body, soul, and spirit, and how impossible it is for me with Miss Hetherington under the circumstances."

"You don't mean to say I am so foolish as to tell her," cried Mab, in alarm.

"I *must*, my darling. I have myself to do so. She only asked for a proposal on that condition—I found my fancy wandering, and I should let her know the truth, and I cannot deceive her, which has been too good to me for I must tell her that I have been true to my vow."

"But you will not mention my name surely!" exclaimed Mab; "that is most unfair. She has been my friend and mine for years, and I cannot break up our intimacy altogether. I am sure papa would be enraged if I must absolutely forbid you from mentioning my name into the matter, and I must."

"Of course I will respect your wishes."

"That is as it may be," rejoined Mab carelessly, "but I won't have my name mixed up with your squabbles now. Indeed, I shall clear out before the *denouement* comes off. Papa has been talking of moving on to our cousin's in Devonshire for some days past, and I will persuade him to leave to-morrow. When I am gone you can do as you like; but mind, if Miss Hetherington guesses my name you must not let her think I knew anything of your little *tendresse* for me. Promise—will you?" she concluded, as she laid her head down on his shoulder and turned her face toward his.

The young man kissed it passionately before he replied:

"I would promise you anything,—right or wrong,—you dear witch! But O Mab, how I dread the ordeal! She has been so kind to me—so very good and kind—I feel as if I would rather put a knife into my throat than confess to my dishonor! And I am so fond of her too, and so very grateful. How is it that your sweet face and maddening ways have made me swerve from my duty in this terrible manner?"

"But why don't you keep to your engagement, then, and marry her?" demanded the girl. "You will be much happier than philandering after me. Money is worth all the spooning in the world, Archie!"

—I am quite aware of that, -
played double yet and I nev
could not love thee, dear
loved I not honor more,' ”
as his lips sought hers again

Meanwhile Felicia sat in
behind them transfixed as
stone. A dozen times sh
speak, had tried to make t
of her proximity, but her st
failed her. Her heart seem
ing up in her body; her blo
turned to gall; she longed
much, that she could die t
where she sat, and never wake
remembrance of her dream
again. But the two young pec
on, entirely oblivious of her p

“How I wish that it we
repeated Archie; “how I drea
her eyes of calm surprise, suc
unmitigated contempt! Wh
grateful cur she will think n
she will wish she had never s
pick me out of the million

Archie, ever so good!" she replied; "but don't let us stay out any longer now. The dew is falling so fast. My dress is quite damp, and papa will be coming out after me in a minute. Let us go back to the house and I will sing all your fears away."

She rose as she spoke, and Archie rose too, and walked beside her silently.

And as soon as they had re-entered the house, Felicia stumbled to her feet, and dragged her limbs mechanically up to her own room and locked herself in.

CHAPTER IX.

THE SACRIFICE.

FELICIA'S room was brightly lighted, but she walked there like a blind woman, feeling her way with outstretched hands till she reached a chair and sunk down in it, covering her poor scarred face in the folds of her woolen shawl. She tried to think deliberately and under the influence of the light, but all, but her mind seemed a chaos. She could not keep her thoughts straight, everything was whirling and whirling, and going round and round in her head.

She wanted to realize that she had deceived herself, that she had made a fearful mistake, that the fault was hers, and no one else was to blame.

But it was impossible. He

countenance, as she conveyed him to the hospital in her carriage.

Then followed the scene of his illness, the painful operation he had undergone, her interest in him and his proposal to her. She did not cry nor moan, nor make any exclamation. She only sat there, cold, pulseless, immovable, like a creature who had received a severe blow on the head, and who was rendered for the time powerless to act or think in any way.

Warrender, who was much attached to her mistress, came to the door more than once and asked for admittance, but Felicia only told her to go away, in a voice which made her sure that something was the matter, and she waited in the Hall porch till she saw Miss Cuthbert coming up the drive, when she communicated her fears to her.

Fanny Cuthbert was not the woman to be afraid of anyone or anything. She was a woman, too, to be obeyed. She marched straight up to Felicia's room and demanded admittance as if she meant to come in.

After a while Felicia was heard mildly remonstrating in rather a suspiciously muffled tone.

"Not to-night, dear Frank. I don't feel quite well."

"Yes, to-night, Felix," answered Miss Cuthbert decidedly. "If you are not quite well that is all the more reason

weaker, and Felicia rose and withdrew the bolts of her door. Cuthbert took a rapid survey of her general appearance and then rushed briskly into the apartment.

"Here is a letter for you which came by the last post," she said, placing a long blue envelope on the table.

"Thank you," replied Felicia, as she took it up and opened it.

It was the clean draft of the letter which she had intended to write to Archibald Nasmyth, forwarded by his signature. She threw it down and hid her face in her hands as her hands burst into tears.

It was the rod that struck the heart and made the waters flow. How vain and hopeful she had been when she drew out the rough draft of that letter; and now, who was to inherit the name—Archie or—or—Mabel Selwyn? The thought placed her loss before her in the plainest colors, and she became convulsed with grief. Miss Cuthbert

woman, and Felicia threw herself into them.

"O Frank," she sobbed, "you were right and I have deceived myself! He has deserted me; he does not love me; he loves another woman!"

"You speak, of course, of Mr. Nasmyth, Felix. How did you find it out? Surely he has never had the presumption to tell you so himself!"

"No; but we exchanged a pledge to be open with each other on the subject, so it would have been only just if he had done so. But I thought I would give them a little surprise this evening, and crept after them into the garden,—it was too dark for them to see me,—so I overheard it all. He didn't mean to hurt me, poor boy, and he cannot help the fact of his feelings changing; but they have changed, and I—I—I don't know what I shall do with the rest of my life, Frank!"

"My poor, dear friend! I needn't ask who is at the bottom of the mischief, for I have seen how she has been trying to entrap the young man for some time past; but what a fool he must be to be entangled with such meretricious charms as hers. There is only one thing left for you to do, my Felix. Let him return to the position from which you have raised him, and forget all about him as soon as you can."

"I shall never forget him, Frank.

other world. ”

“Tell me how you over-
and what he said, Felix, if
mind. You may have n
mistake.”

Felicia shook her head.

“No, Frank; I care too m
it to have made a mistake.
all in the garden when I w
stairs, so I walked out on ti
find them, and sat down unde
berry tree. After a while A
Mab came and took two cha
front of me, and I could not
ing what they said. I should
them I was there at once, onl
words from Archie paralyze
that degree that I lost all
speak or move.”

“And they were——” s
Cuthbert inquisitively.

“Oh, you can guess, dear
give me the pain of repeat
He spoke very nicely of poor
said how fond he was of

my offer and taken the place of my adopted son. How foolish I was not to foresee that this must happen sooner or later, and to accept his proposal of marriage! It is all my fault, Frank! You saw the folly of my conduct directly I told you I was engaged to him; and I won't have him blamed, nor Mabel, nor anyone, indeed, for it has only been a mistake all round. It comes a little hard at first," said Felicia, with quivering lips, "but I shall get over it in time, and I am so glad no one knows of it but just ourselves. It will make it so much easier."

"And what steps shall you take in the matter, Felix? You cannot let this gentleman continue to accept your hospitality while he is making surreptitious love to one of your guests. I think even your humility will refuse to stand such an indignity as that!"

"Oh, yes, of course he will leave Cheshunt Hall. I am sure of it! And he means to keep the promise he gave me on our becoming engaged, and tell me that his feelings have changed. I heard him say so. But it was pitiable to see the distress the idea gave him. He said, poor boy, that he would rather put a knife into his throat than face me with the confession!"

"I don't wonder at it," replied Fanny Cuthbert coldly. "I am surprised he hasn't done it, instead of only talking

him in every way. It is c
that he should love a girl of h
The folly lies in my ever hav
silly as to think my poor pla
could hold any charm in his c
O Fanny," she cried, relaps
storm of grief, "I loved him
with me just this while, my d
will never worry you again
but if I don't talk to someon
feel as if my heart would brea

"Talk on, dear Felix. Tel
you like and don't fear but th
sympathize with all you say,
her friend, as she held the grier
woman close to her loving brea

"I loved him so, Frank!
have been foolish, but I *did*
so! There was nothing—no
earth that I would not have do
would not do now to insure h
ness. And I was silly enough
that a luxurious home and ev
fort that money could buy.
dear, dear!"

he is blaming himself already far more than he has any reason to do. He must marry Mabel Selwyn, Frank—there is no question about that; and perhaps when the pain of this disappointment is over, and I feel strong and brave enough to witness their married happiness, I may still be of use to them in various ways, and that will be a balm for my own sorrow and my loss of him."

"Do as you will, Felix. There is nothing you can do but what will raise you in my estimation," said Miss Cuthbert.

"But if I am to be able to do this, our parting must be effected with as little outrage as possible to Archie's pride, Frank; for he is very proud, though you may not credit it. I don't think he would accept any favor at my hands again, if he fancied he had injured me in any way. So I want you to keep my counsel, dear, and to help me in a little plan that has entered my head."

"What is it?"

"I heard Archie tell Mabel that he was pledged to disclose the truth to me, and she said that in that case she should leave Cheshunt Hall to-morrow, and I believe she will carry out her plan. I want you to see the Selwyns off for me, Frank, without my saying good-by to them—I don't think I could kiss Mab just yet. You will be able to devise

Shall you not leave him
the subject, Felix?"

"No; I don't want him
pain of telling me he has
mind. I could not bear
humiliation, his shame, his
It would unnerve me!
mutual compact, as I have
tell each other if we grew
engagement. It cannot si
of us has the painful co
make, and I think I am th
the two, and can better bea
of it. So I mean to forest
shall tell him I have been
the matter during my illness,
will be more for our happines
up the idea of marrying e
This will save him from a
which he dreads and leave
show him any kindness he
need of in after life. Don't
with me that it will be the
for both of us?"

"Are you an angel. Felix

only a woman, Frank—a very unhappy, lonely woman, who wishes devoutly at this moment that she had never been born!”

Her friend quieted her before she left her to retire for the night; but poor Felicia lay awake until the dawn, turning and tossing on her bed, hardly able to realize the misfortune that had happened to her, and yet dreading the moment that should decide her fate and part her fortunes forever from those of Archibald Nasmyth.

Frances Cuthbert was an excellent deputy to carry out anyone's wishes, and she descended to the breakfast table with such an account of their hostess' condition, and the absolute necessity of complete rest for her, that nobody was bold enough to suggest an interview. Mr. Selwyn expressed his extreme regret that he had to leave without seeing his “dear Miss Hetherington” again, but his daughter and he had outstayed the limits they originally intended to put to their visit, he said, and so had decided to go on to other friends to-day, and under the sad circumstances of Miss Hetherington's illness it would be better if the Hall were empty.

To this proposition Miss Cuthbert made no manner of objection. On the contrary, she replied that she thought it was quite uncertain when Miss Hether-

for change of air.

Archibald Nasmyth looked and nervously as she said to him soon as the breakfast was at the table, she approached her side.

"Is Miss Hetherington really ill?" he questioned. "Did she hear anything to announce, or received any bad news?"

Miss Cuthbert looked full in the face as she replied:

"Felicia certainly seems to have something on her mind, Mr. Nasmyth, and I fancy she wants to confide in me about it. She told me to say to you that she would wish to speak to you to-morrow noon, when the house is quiet, and please not to mention it till the Miss Selwyn are gone!"

She saw him turn very pale, and spoke, and guessed he thought the secret had been found out. He then turned away with the remark that he was at Miss Hetherington's service any time, and limped after her.

I have gone up to see her every afternoon!"

"You're in for it, and no mistake," replied Mab; "and now don't forget what I told you, about not bringing my name into it. If she has found out you're spoons on me, you must say I know nothing of it. I'm very glad papa fell in with my views of leaving to-day, and still more, that Miss Hetherington is too sick to see us before we go."

"Isn't that rather ungrateful of you, Mab? She has always been so kind to you."

"I know she has; but that day's over, you may bet your bottom dollar. She's not quite saint enough to extend the right hand of fellowship to a younger rival. And when you've made your little confession to her, all the fat will be in the fire."

"Mab, one word before we part. This will probably be my last day at Cheshunt Hall. For of course I shall not be able to stay here for one hour after Miss Hetherington knows the truth. You will give me your address before you go, so that I may write and tell you the upshot of our interview?"

"Oh, yes, with pleasure! I shall expect you to write to me."

"And you will let me know when you return to town, that I may be with you the very first thing, won't you, darling?" he whispered.

“None at all!” he answered
ately. “What would all the
the world be worth to me with
You have promised to be very
me, remember, in exchange
and I shall come the very first
I can and claim that promise!

“All right. You will find
to redeem it,” said Mab;
must let me go now, for I
settled to start by the twelve
train. *Au revoir!* It will not
before we meet again.”

And with a farewell kiss
him.

Archibald Nasmyth felt ver-
able after she had gone, for a
of the glamour that surrounded
ished with her presence. He w-
about the grounds all the morn-
ing forward to his coming i-
with Felicia much as a schoolb-
forward to a visit to a dentist.

But he had determined to

or that he had the courage to drown or hang himself before he had to look Felicia in the face and tell her he had been accepting all her benefits on false pretenses.

Miss Cuthbert observed that he did not touch anything at luncheon, and he looked so pale and drawn that in pity for his feelings, as well as those of her friend, she proposed to Felicia to get the ordeal over as soon as possible. So that the clock was striking three as the summons came for him to go up to Miss Hetherington's room.

He found Felicia very white and heavy-eyed, and nervous, but perfectly calm. She had had a hard battle with herself, but she had conquered and was prepared to meet her fate.

"Sit down, Archie," she began, without making any advance toward offering him her hand, "I want to have a little quiet talk with you. I am afraid what I am going to say will surprise you a great deal, and perhaps hurt you a little, but it is something that must be said, so it is no use evading it!"

Archibald Nasmyth, with but one thought in his head, imagined naturally that she was about to allude to his own defection and commenced stammering out:

"Felicia, if you will believe me——"

But she stopped the words by laying her hand upon his.

cowardice to speak the truth, c
giving each other pain? Yes,
you remember it. I hardly
when I extracted that promise fr
Archie, that I should be the fir
advantage of our agreement."

"You?" he exclaimed in a
ment.

"Yes, I! I have been think
deeply, since I have been coc
here, both of you and myself
have come to the conclusion
would have been much better if
accepted my offer of adopting
son, and not tried to build up
relationship between us, for w
are eminently unsuited. Arch
dear, don't be angry with me, bu
not be your wife!"

The young man did not imm
respond. It was what he intend
dreaded, to say to her; but, w
contrariety of human nature

wished to be free his thoughts flew at once to all the good things he should lose with her.

"You cannot marry me!" he said at last. "You wish to break our engagement! This is rather a sudden resolution, is it not?"

Felicia was nothing if she was not truthful.

"Yes," she answered, "the decision has been, perhaps, rather suddenly arrived at, but I have had fears all through our acquaintance lest we should have been too rash in entering on an engagement of marriage. I am so much older than you, Archie. My habits and customs must necessarily differ so much from yours, that we cannot hope to be companions, and what is marriage without companionship? We should drift asunder with the passing years—I am certain of that—and my old age would be more desolate than if I spent it alone. So I hope you will try to see the matter in the same light as I do, and give me back my liberty with a good grace!"

"I do not see that I have any alternative," said Archibald Nasmyth.

"I am very much obliged to you for taking it so quietly," replied Felicia, with trembling lip. "There is another thing," she went on timidly; "I feel that in one sense this rupture must prove a loss to you, Archie—I mean in a pecuniary way. You expected to be

“No, no: —

hear of it. You have done a
more for me already than I
right to expect, or than I have
Don't try, I beg, to add to n
tions to you. I am so glad
been brave enough to tell n
change in your feelings rega
Miss Hetherington. It is, as
much better for both of us;
let my heavy sense of responsi
I shall always think of you as
factor and friend, who came
time when I was without a c
the world to look after me, c
lived or died. I—I—would
to do my duty by you and
life happy, as far as lay in
but doubtless you are right
that it would have been
power. Never reproach
my account, Miss Hetherin
quite strong and well ag
shall go back to my worl
heart, and perhaps some c
ner to accept

"I think so, thanks! Mr. Selwyn has been kind enough to introduce me to Messrs. Challen & Edwardes, who have agreed to read the novel Miss Selwyn and I are writing together, as soon as it is completed. And until the golden shower flows in," added Archie, with a smile, "I still have a large portion of the generous sum you placed to my account with Messrs. Franklin to carry me on."

Felicia could hardly stand that smile. It looked so much as if he was glad to be set free, to work his own way in the world, unencumbered by an old woman like herself.

"I am glad," she responded, "and you must not forget how rejoiced I shall be to hear of your happiness and success. You must not let my decision interfere with my being still your friend, and since no one knows that we ever called ourselves engaged, except Miss Cuthbert, no one need be the wiser for this separation between us!"

"Certainly not!" acquiesced Archibald Nasmyth; "but under the circumstances, Miss Hetherington, you must let me leave Cheshunt Hall as soon as may be, and begin work on my own account. I must not lose any more time. I feel now that I have been idle too long already."

"That must be just as you choose," said Felicia, standing up; "and perhaps

cross the table as she spoke
seized and carried it to his lips.

Like a flash of lightning at
that moment all he was giving
in houses and money and land
a true, good, and generous he
would have sacrificed all to make
happy.

"O Felicia!" he cried, with
emotion, "this parting tears my
pieces. Is your mind irrevocably
up?"

"Irrevocably, Archie," she answered
faintly. "It hurts me a little, but
it must be. For Heaven's sake,
prolong it, or you will make me ill
good-by, and go!"

"Someone has been setting
against me!" he exclaimed.
certain this parting is not of your
free will."

"It is—it is indeed! We should
have been happy together."

"So be it, then," cried the young man; "you have ruptured our bonds, and I have no alternative but to submit. Good-by! May God bless you!" and without another word Archibald Nasmyth turned from her and ran quickly out of the room.

It has been said before that Felicia was not a fainting woman. Had she been she would have fainted now. The room spun round and round as she put forth her hands and grasped the table for support. She felt her sight failing her and her hearing growing weaker; while her brain seemed as though it were on fire. But she stamped down the disposition she had to leave this world for a while and lose consciousness of her pain, and steadied herself sufficiently to totter to a side table and pour out a glass of water, and drink some and throw the remainder over her face.

And just then her faithful Frank, who had been watching for Archibald Nasmyth's exit, came to her assistance and braced her up with comfortable words and promises of future peace. It was the best argument she could have used for her friend's benefit, for it seemed so hopeless and so far off that it brought down the tears like rain.

"O Frank, dear Frank!" she sobbed, "if he had only seemed grieved or surprised when I told him we must part,

..... now thankful y
be that you found this out
riage instead of after. The
lining to every cloud, you
this is yours. Your disap
very bitter, but time will cu
it would have been so mu
there had been no possibility
ation. Now you are free t
your own life again."

"Yes, yes, I know,"
Felicia, "but I am too old to
again, Frank. It is all over
moment—I feel it—and he—h
to—*her!*"

CHAPTER X.

THE REJECTION.

WHEN Archibald

He had never felt anything but affection for his *fiancée* or pleasure in the prospect of sharing her good things; but Mabel Selwyn's fascinations had exercised such a charm over him that he knew, at all risks, he must follow and win her. He could not have them both, and he could not give up Mabel.

He heaved a natural sigh at the vanishing of all his hopes of independence, but he was not sure at the same time if to work for and with the girl of his choice would not make him a happier man.

"Lapped in all this luxury, without any necessity for work, I should probably have become lazy and never have achieved anything worthy of myself. Now, my darling and I will work together and build up names that shall live long after we have passed away."

He considered himself a great philosopher, but in reality he was only a very young man, led away by his senses, and the beguilements of an arrant coquette, to believe he had found the love of a lifetime, and was ready to attack and kill the giants of poverty and dependence for her sake.

Yet he could not quit the roof where he had been made so welcome without a pang for his inconstancy. His only consolation was that Miss Hetherington had taken it upon herself to dismiss him. In his relief at not having to confess his

when he came quietly to the
she should not have sug-
unsuitability to him by deg-
of blurting it out in so r-
fashion.

But Archibald Nasmyth
to think of that now. He
back to London to work h-
Mab and fortune, and the f-
very golden, was at all ever
fair.

Thanks to Felicia's ger-
was not in want of money,
the sum she had deposited
in the bank remained at h-
and since she had been the c-
their engagement, for no fa-
knew of—for so he believed-
scruple in using what had
gift to him.

Still he sighed as he thr-
article into the portma-
strapped it up. Love in a
flat is all very well, but it ta-
love to make up for the lac-

When he arrived in London he did not go to his old room in John Street. It would have been altogether beneath his dignity to live there in his altered condition, as the prospective client of Messrs. Challen & Edwardes, and husband of Miss Mabel Selwyn. His residence at Cheshunt Hall had rather enlarged Mr. Nasmyth's views of things in general.

He felt quite sure that the kindly interest Mr. Selwyn had displayed in him, on account of his grandfather, the professor, would be doubled when he heard he was the chosen husband of his only child; and that he would for her sake exert himself so powerfully on his behalf as to send him whizzing to the top of the literary tree in half the time it took less favored men to climb there.

He went to an hotel for the first night of his stay in town, and the following day he selected two pretty rooms in the vicinity of South Kensington, where the Selwyns resided, and which cost him four times the rent of his former modest lodging.

The first thing he did was to write Mab a true and particular account of the interview he had had with Miss Hetherington; the next, to pay a visit to the publishers, Messrs. Challen & Edwardes, in Piccadilly.

These gentlemen, who had published several pamphlets for Mr. Selwyn, chiefly

consenting to his request.

When, therefore, young looking a very heavy swell, and whole place belonged to him, went into their office and demanded one of the partners, they were to understand what business he possibly had with their firm.

"Mr. Challen is not in," replied the clerk to whom Archibald had shown his card, "and Mr. Edwardes is out and cannot see you."

"Do you know who I am?" asked you, reading the name on my card. "I am," answered Archie.

The clerk held it to the light and murmured "Mr. Archibald N. Challen." Then he glanced up at the stranger and said, "Have you an appointment with Mr. Edwardes, sir?"

"No; I only returned to town to-day, but I wish to speak to him particularly. Tell him I am next."

The clerk was young and new to the trade. He made a second journey into the *sanctum sanctorum*, but came back faster than he had done before.

"Mr. Edwardes' compliments, and he knows nothing about the book you mention, sir; and it is impossible that he can see you to-day!"

Archibald was annoyed, but merely saying, "I will call again, then," he left the office.

His high hopes received just the smallest sprinkling of cold water by this little experience. He had imagined that the name of Mr. Selwyn was an "Open Sesame" in the literary profession, and a sudden fear ran through him lest he should have built too much on his future father-in-law's interest. But he returned to his apartments and set to work to revise the manuscript which Mab had left in his hands till they should meet again.

A long, rambling letter from her, full of congratulations on the easy way he had got out of the scrape into which they thought they had fallen, sent all his thoughts back to the beloved object, particularly as she told him the people they were staying with were so dull that she had persuaded her papa to cut their visit short, and they should return to town a fortnight sooner than they had intended.

eyes, and we must really be more
when we meet in town, or 'The
Pearls' will not be finished till
of Christmas. Papa is beginning
disagreeable now, and says it
be proper for you and me to
together while he is at his home
club! As if we couldn't take
ourselves without him! He
are too young and too good-looking
We really must make a stand
such nonsense at once, or there
no end to it. It would be just
same if I got another *collaborator*
Fathers are really the greatest men
in the world! They ought to
up as soon as their daughters
enough to take care of themselves

This letter, though it was full
familiar terms, such as calling him
dear old chum," and "my haughty
boy," with various others as fitted
to his vanity, left, somehow, a
pleasant impression on Archibald

And when her father suggested they were too young and handsome to study and compose together, why had not Mab seized that opportunity to tell Mr. Selwyn that she loved him and intended to pass her life with him? It would have come so naturally from her then, and she was not the sort of girl to be shy about speaking of her attachment. It was a pity she should have missed so good a chance; but doubtless she considered that it was his part to speak of it first.

He contented himself with writing her a long, loving epistle in reply, but he did not mention the hopes that were burning in his breast for fear of the letter falling into her father's hands. Several days passed after that, that were rather desolate ones to Archibald Nasmyth. He wanted Mab to come home, if only to drive away the remorseful thoughts that sometimes attacked his mind when anything recalled his past intimacy with Felicia Hetherington.

It gave him pain to pass her house in Norfolk Street—still more to look up at the long line of windows of St. George's Hospital, and remember all the gracious kindnesses she showed him while he lay there.

One day, as he was passing the building he suddenly recalled the fact that it was visiting day, and went in to see the

showed the loss of his limb.

"And what's become of the one you used to visit you here?"

"Ah, she was a real friend and was. Do you ever see any one like her now? You wouldn't walk about as you do, sir, if it hadn't been for me. I heard tell she paid pounds a week for that there leg of yours. She was sweet on you, myself, the nurse, giggling, 'but I shan't come to nothing, after this.'"

"Sweet on me! What a girl! Nurse!" exclaimed Archie, turning colored like a girl at the accusation. "You silly women can never do anything but love and love. Hetherington is a great friend of mine. I have been staying with her in London. But there is nothing of that kind between us, I can assure you!"

"Ah, well!" replied the nurse. "She was older than you by a bit, I know; but you might have been worse than go in double harness."

"You used to talk rather against than for Miss Hetherington when I was here, if I remember rightly, nurse!" said Archibald Nasmyth.

"Perhaps I did, sir, for we nurses are apt to get a bit jealous of anybody coming in and fussing over our patients. But I've often thought of that lady since, and I never see anyone so wrapped up in another as she was in you! If she'd have been your own mother she couldn't have cared for you more—and the mother's love beats every love in the world, you know, sir!"

"Yes, I have heard so, nurse; but I have an engagement and must go now. Good-by, and thank you for all the kindnesses you showed me. I shall never forget it!" said Archie, as he slipped a piece of money in the woman's hand and walked hurriedly away.

As he did so he put up his gloved hand and drew it across his eyes. He wished he had been able to part more amicably with Felicia Hetherington. She certainly must have had some cause of complaint against him to have dismissed him so cavalierly.

She was so calm, so just, so dispassionate, that she would surely have given him the opportunity to defend himself, unless she had been convinced that no defense was possible. Could she have been told of his intimacy with Mab Selwyn? Could Miss Cuthbert have over-

for though all his senses were en-
by Mab, he still felt deep grat-
Felicia, and would rather have
his own feelings than hers. Bein-
with no one to talk to, his thoug-
continually reverting to Felicia
days, and he thirsted for the re-
his lady love, that he might cor-
doubts and fears to her.

At last, after three or four w-
waiting, he received the joyful ne-
the Selwyns had, in Mab's pa-
"made tracks for home." Arc-
done little during the interval bu-
money.

He had not thought it worth v-
put pen to paper till his *collab*-
returned to take up the narrative
she had dropped it, neither had
ceeded in gaining an interview w-
publishers; but he regretted th-
cumstance the less because he had
to the conclusion that it would be
for him to enter upon the scene
future triumphs.

He had visited sundry music halls and theaters, and driven a good deal about town in hansoms, and eaten several dinners at restaurants, but, beside these occupations, Mr. Archibald Nasmyth had done nothing to further his ascent of the tree of fame.

But with a true lover's mode of argument, he decided that he could easily make up for lost time when he had gained Mab's side again. How was it possible for him to fix his mind on anything when it was filled with the idea of meeting her and receiving from her lips the guerdon he should claim in exchange for all he had relinquished for her sake!

On the very evening the Selwyns arrived in Cathcart Street he presented himself there for admittance. He had often walked past the house before and pictured how it would look when Mab's bright face was there to welcome him, but he had never entered it. The girl had been used to talk very vivaciously about "our house in London," and though he knew that Mr. Selwyn was not rich, in comparison with Felicia Hetherington, he had expected to see a very pretty and cozy little abode. The first aspect, however, was rather discouraging.

After repeated demands for admittance, a dingy-looking maid servant partially unclosed the hall door and

Miss Gerwyn, and say I
particular business."

The servant took the corner of her apron, and closed the door, and went away and left him standing on the steps outside.

"Well, this is a hospitable reception," thought Archie. "Some creature must be some chance in for the occasion of the home."

However, the certainty of his position, as soon as his identity was clear, consoled him for the position, and his patience was rewarded, for in a few minutes the servant returned with the information.

"The young lady says as you may go upstairs for a little while, but mustn't stay long."

Without heeding the urgency of the invitation, Archie went down the staircase as quickly as he

in disorder, but she looked all the handsomer for her *deshabille*, and in Archie's love-stricken eyes simply ravishing.

He went straight up to her and took her in his arms, and she let him do it without remonstrance, though she seemed rather scared and hurried.

"O Archie! what made you come so soon?" she said. "We only arrived a couple of hours ago. Papa has gone round to his club, and may be back at any moment, and I would rather he did not find you here just yet!"

"So soon!" he echoed, "when I have been wearying night and day for this moment to arrive! How long did you think I should keep away, my darling? Why, I have done positively nothing since we parted—Nothing, that is to say, but dream of you, you tantalizing little witch, and of the days when we should be together again. Wasn't it a fortunate thing that Miss Hetherington got sick of me before she found out anything about us? Now our love need make no difference in her friendship for your father and yourself, and perhaps after a while she may re-include me in her category of friends. She can hardly keep you in and leave me out, eh, Mab?" he concluded significantly.

But the girl still seemed uneasy.

"No, I suppose not," she said. "But, Archie, I'm very much afraid we shall not have the liberty in town that

... , but he says it is necessary that in order to col-
should sit together all day.
did not signify so much,
Cheshunt Hall, because people
free and easy with each other
country, but it would become
able in town and do me harm.

"What nonsense! Who is
it, if we keep our own counsel
Archie.

"I suppose he means the
people in the house."

"What other people? I think
lived alone with your father, I

"So I do; but there are
lodgers always peeping and
about, to say nothing of the
This is not papa's own house
know. We have only three
it. I generally write in my
but of course that would be a
question with you; and this is
sitting room, so we should be
constant interruption. Do you

He had not been

had been dreaming, of spending hours and days in work with his betrothed, flown to? Into the limbo of forbidden things! His disappointment showed plainly in his face.

"This is bad news, Mab," he replied. "I don't see how we are to write together if we sit in different houses."

"No! I suppose we shall have to give it up," said Mab, with a *moue*. "I wish to goodness I was independent, and then you should come to see me as often as you chose. But papa is rather a tartar at home. He keeps this room entirely to himself when he is in, and I dare not drop a pin while he is thinking or writing. We never see any visitors. We are not rich enough, in the first place, and we have nowhere to receive them, in the second. But don't look so down in the mouth, dear boy! We will manage to finish 'The Family Pearls' at any rate. There can't be so much more to do. We can meet in the Park, or somewhere, to decide on the plot, and then send our share to one another as it is written."

"We shall never collaborate in that way," said Archie gloomily.

"Oh, yes, we shall!" replied Mab cheerfully, and as if the matter were not of any special moment; "and if we find it too tiresome, we can go on with our separate work when we have finished this story. Papa does not think great

... make more money
but as I said before, we will
Family Pearls' if we die
now, Archie, I must send you
papa may come back at any
and I'm sure there'll be a
finds you here."

"But why a row, my darling
her lover. "I flattered myself
Selwyn rather liked me than
He always seemed so pleased
my grandfather at Cheshunt
of my own literary prospects
be a terrible disappointment
does not let me come and
often as I choose."

"Then I'm afraid you are
be disappointed," replied the
a careless laugh, "for he has
any young man become intimate
He is pleased to see them at
them at other people's houses
won't admit them to his own."

"But I'm not like other men
ling," whispered Archie. "I
Selwyn will -"

thing about our attachment to your father?"

"Good gracious, no! Whatever should I do it for? Why, he'd tear me in pieces if I let him guess it! You don't know how particular he is about me."

"I can well understand it. I shall be quite as particular, too. But if the course of true love is to run smooth, he must certainly be told of it. It is impossible I can see you often without he approves of our engagement."

"Our *what?*" exclaimed Mab, opening her eyes.

"Our engagement, my darling!"

"I didn't know there was any engagement between us!"

"O Mab! you know quite well what I mean! I have never made you a formal proposal,—they are out of date in this century,—but we understand each other. You love me and I love you—that is sufficient. I suppose it will be years before we can marry," continued the young man with a sigh, "unless, indeed, your father could help us a little at first starting; but I am only too happy to feel I am engaged to you, and that you will wait for me until I have got a home to take you to."

"Are you mad?" cried the girl, breaking away from the embrace in which he held her.

Archibald Nasmyth turned as pale as

...why do you ask me such
tion?" he said, after a sh
"What have I said to show me
Are we *not* engaged? Do we
and intend to be married by
Has not all our intimacy—our
of love and caresses and pr
fidelity—meant this and nothi

"I don't know what *you* meant," replied the girl, with
ing laugh. "I often told
were going too far. But ce
never intended anything of th
never dreamed of such a conc
our pleasant little flirtation
you must be raving, Archie!
What have we to marry on, ar
are we likely to get it? No
literature, you may lay your
ling! If I make enough to bu
gloves and bonnets for the re
life, I shall think myself luck
sides, if ever I marry, I have
tion of going on working after
man who marries me will have
me

enough to get me off his hands, but it must be to a man who could keep me and help him. I'm quite sure I shan't go for less! You've been indulging in a ridiculous dream, my boy. I am sure *I* never put such ideas in your head!"

"Your pretended love did," he answered fiercely. "What else should I have supposed all your kisses and whispers and protestations of affection to mean? What do such things generally lead to between two young people, unless it be marriage? And I thought you were so true all the time you were deceiving me!" he added, with a groan.

"I wasn't deceiving you!" pouted Mab. "I like you awfully. Didn't I say just now, that if I had a house of my own, you should be in it every day?"

"Yes, to be made the sport of your coquetry," said her companion bitterly. "You would let me kiss you and make love to you, and break my heart over you, but you would not marry me, nor give up any mortal thing for my sake! No, thank you, Mab. What you have told me this evening must end our intimacy at once and for ever. I see we have been playing at cross-purposes! I have been loving you truly and earnestly, believing you cared for me as much in return, while you have treated me only as a toy to pass an idle hour with. You are a flirt! A heartless, deceitful flirt! You have said things to

work by myself, and try to
ever had the misfortune
I have given up all my
your sake, and must go back
poverty from which Miss
rescued me. I trust that
may sweeten your remembrance.

"Why not go back to Milton herself?" said Mab and dare say she will forgive readily when you say you naughty boy and are sorry have done. She is not at a woman can afford to pass forlorn hope easily. I believe reinstated if you only try!"

"Mock on!" replied Armstrong. "Nothing you can increase the contempt you me feel for your behavior. speak one word derogatory Hetherington in my presence been far too good already and me, and I am only sorry meretricious charms should

You have lost one of your toys at least. I shall never meet you of my free will again!"

And with that he turned hastily away and ran down into the street.

Mab heard the hall door slam after him and felt some compunction, not because she had made him unhappy, but that she had let her true feelings toward him be so easily betrayed, and lost a pleasant companion too soon.

As for Archie, he walked away from Cathcart Street with a brain on fire. If Felicia Hetherington had wanted to be revenged on him, she was so now.

He felt as if he were going mad, as he hastened not to his temporary home, but to one of the numerous places where drink and laughter and play should help him to forget for a little while the demons of rage and disappointment and fury that had got hold of him.

He had lost his faith and hope and love, all his prospects in life had been shattered in one moment, what wonder if he grew desperate and left off caring where his fate might lead him!

For weeks he passed his life in scenes of debauchery after the fashion of disappointed men, and when the delirium had passed and he had grown a little calm again, and felt better able to face the world, he found his little stock of money was at its last ebb.

IT was time that Frances C
turned to take care of h
and as soon as Cheshunt
cleared of the Selwyns and
Nasmyth, she pressed Felic
go back with her, and stay in
a while. But she steadily ref
so—very gently, as was her
with a firmness that Miss
found it beyond her power t

“I am like a wounded an
Frank,” she said. “I want
into some out-of-the-way plac
in the dark!”

“Die in the dark!” ec
friend; “what nonsense, Feli
are too old to talk like that.
live half a century still, please
make others happy!”

Felicia smiled faintly.

“You know what I mean, I
have no idea of posing like a
miss of seventeen. But I feel
over this little disappointment

or the parson, would worry me and make me cross. I would rather go quite away with Warrender somewhere, and not come back to Cheshunt till I am myself again. I am not quite myself now, you know, Frank," said Felicia hesitatingly; "I feel as if I had been rudely awakened from a beautiful dream, and were not sure if I were asleep or awake. You will be patient with me, I am sure, and let me have my own way in this!"

"Of course you shall have your own way, darling," replied Miss Cuthbert, "though I should have loved to have you all to myself at Llangibby. Where do you propose to go, Felix?"

"Oh, I have not made up my mind about it yet, but somewhere that I have not seen before. I feel as if I should like to take Warrender, and wander away to some completely new scene, where no one will know me, and I shall know no one. By and by, when I have got over the first shock of this, I will return to Cheshunt Hall for the winter. As for London," said Felicia, with a shudder, "I don't think I shall ever be able to look at the place again!"

Miss Cuthbert was too wise to attempt to combat anything that her friend said at that moment. She knew that she was not capable of judging of her future actions, and that the best way was to leave her perfectly alone, to do

... Only, as I return
tomorrow, I should like to
decide on some plan before
I would rather not leave you
all by yourself, Felicia!"

"Very well, Frank. I
tomorrow, then, if it will be
convenient to you. I will go with
Warrender to Switzerland
'make tracks,' as—as Mab
calls it for Lausanne, and go there
country. As soon as we are
able to send you my address, and then
you must write and tell me
how you hear about—Archie and the

"But, my dear friend, will
it be a way to drown the remembrance
of trouble? Will it not rather
refresh, to be looking out for
Nasmyth?"

"It will make no difference.
You can't force these things
on your mind. Your mind will be full of him
for a long time to come. And—and—I
will not come back to England until
I am married."

is a barrister in the Temple, and not likely to know anything of the Selwyns and their doings."

"But you could write straight to Mr. Selwyn after a time, Frank, and say that I am abroad, and you wish to send me the last tidings of them. You mustn't forget that none of them know I have guessed their secret, not even Archie, and I should prefer them not to think I had any grudge against them. Neither Mabel nor Archie dream of the real reason I gave him back his liberty, and all I want to know is, how Mr. Selwyn receives the announcement of their mutual attachment, and if he will help them to attain their wishes."

"And if he doesn't, I suppose you will," replied Miss Cuthbert, in a tone of such unusual contempt that it brought the tears into Felicia's eyes.

"I don't know,—I haven't thought about it yet,—but I suppose it might be as good a way as any other to use my money," she answered simply.

Miss Cuthbert's only reply was to throw her arms round her neck and whisper:

"Forgive me, Felix, forgive me!"

On the next day they parted, as they had proposed—Miss Cuthbert going back to her Welsh home, and Felicia, attended by Warrender, starting for Brussels and Spa, on her way to Lausanne.

the absurdity
ever thought things could
otherwise, Felicia abandoned
her grief, which was so very
whether her friends thought
lous or not.

As soon as she found herself
perfect liberty to do as she chose
natural restraint she had put
self (even before Fanny Cuth
way, and for weeks she seemed
in a species of despair, during
God hid his face from her
could neither think, nor re
pray!

Night after night Felicia spent
knees, not uttering any spoken
yet entreating and longing with
heart that Heaven might have
her, and let the life, which seemed
ebb away before the morning light
Heaven is too merciful to answer
wild petitions which men put
writhing under earthly discipline
It sees ahead while our eyes are
with tears

bottle, which she knows contains the dose to ease its pain.

Felicia's nature was not one to rail against the will of Heaven. She would rather bend low while the waves went over her. And this storm bent her very low indeed! She could have finished her life contentedly in the calm way it was flowing when we first saw her. She was not happy then, because there was one great good lacking, but at the same time she was not miserable.

She had never tasted the sweets of loving and being loved, and her sighs over the void thus created in her existence were like a vague desire to taste, or try something which has never come within our reach. That is a very different thing from the grief we suffer at the loss of what we have enjoyed and prized.

But Felicia Hetherington was not a woman to weakly give herself over to despair for long. The first outburst of nature over, she braced herself to be calm, if she could not be happy. She began to take long mountainous walks with Warrender, and to interest herself in the peasants and their families, the little children of which soon learned to recognize the kind English lady who carried cakes and sugar plums in her pockets for them, and who seemed so pleased with their little offerings of wild flowers and mountain pebbles.

...telling her, and with
Cuthbert to ask what she
The answer was, to Felicia
unsatisfactory:

"I have written to Mr.
you desired me, but can't
of Mr. Nasmyth in return.
writes back, asking most
after your health and well
daughter's name as well as
He asks, moreover, for you
Am I to give it him? He
Miss Selwyn is succeeding
with her writing, and is en
his assistance, on a three-vol
but not a word does he say
smyth. It seems very stran
not understand it! Shall I
and ask him pointblank?"

To which Felicia answered
of post: "Yes! Do!"

Within the week she receiv
letter.

his address.' I would inclose his answer, only it is too bulky. In it he says that he cannot give me any information concerning Mr. Nasmyth, that he doesn't even know his address, nor has he ever called at the house since the first evening they arrived in town. He adds: 'I may tell you, in confidence, that I fancy something took place between my daughter and him on that occasion that has broken up the intimacy between them. You may remember that he was very attentive to Mabel while we were staying at Chesnut Hall. I never interfere in such matters, because I have the most perfect confidence in her discretion; but, from his sudden disappearance, I conclude she must have given him his dismissal. Indeed, she has hinted as much to me. If the young man entertained any hopes with regard to my daughter, he must be very foolish, as she has no *dot*, unfortunately, and it is imperative she should marry—if she ever marries at all—a man with money. And, naturally, in this light, Mr. Nasmyth was eminently unsuitable! Added to which, I have not much faith either in his brains or his capacity for work. He will never do much good in literature, if I am not much mistaken, and for such it is a starving profession! A pity his people did not bring him up to some honest trade instead!'"

missed, perhaps with scoffs at
tions, from the girl's presence
her father should decry his
abilities in so unkind a manner.

Poor boy! He deserved
fate than this, although he
been able to keep faithful.
She commenced from that
be uneasy on his account.
he doing? Where was he living?
were his funds lasting out?
work which would provide him
means of subsistence when his
purse ran dry?

It was useless for her to think
that Archibald Nasmyth's sagacious
doings were no longer any concern
hers. It was terrible to think
lost the friends for whom he
up his claim on her, and had
to go to, perhaps, in case of
Felicia began to worry over him
as she had done in the days of
could not rest quiet and inactive
longer. She even came back

before, now that she had drawn on, and then rejected, her poor boy.

But she thought she could speak to her father about him. She might even summon up courage to tell Mr. Selwyn that Archie had been engaged to her before he proposed to Mabel,—he was such an old man, he would not be likely to ridicule her thoughts of marriage,—and it would show him how unjustly his daughter had behaved to Mr. Nasmyth.

If any dash of pride interposed at this juncture, to interfere with her generous forgiveness of the slight offered her, Felicia stamped it down as if it had been a sin.

“After all,” she said to herself, “it is in no one’s power to keep constant, if a more seductive attraction comes in the way. I suppose if I had been less confident of my ability to keep a man faithful to me, I should not have thrown Archie so intimately in the society of a pretty girl like Mabel! And above all, we promised to be friends to each other. If he has forgotten that, it is no reason I should do so. It is not a proper pride that makes me shrink from opening the subject with Mr. Selwyn. It is mortified vanity, for fear that Mabel may have heard the truth from Archie and communicated it to her father. I will anticipate any remarks he may make about it by telling him the truth at once! My only fear is, lest people should think

...they really
will not be nearly so hard
fact of his desertion has
the fact of knowing he is
trouble and I might have re
would be."

Mr. Selwyn was quick to
friend's summons. He ha
up hope of becoming some c
sessor of Cheshunt Hall, tho
never had sufficient courage
pose to its mistress. He pres
self in Norfolk Street an hou
wire reached him, and was s
see the difference in Felicia
ance.

"My dear Miss Hethering
commenced, "have you been
you went away? I never saw
ing so thin and pale in my life

"Oh, no! I have not been
you, Mr. Selwyn. It is all
effects of that unfortunate
which shook me more than I t
the time. But pray don't let
myself I --

him. It is so very strange that he should not communicate with either of the two friends who were good to him during his illness!"

"Do you think so, Miss Hetherington? To me it seems very much like the treatment one generally receives from the world. The young man has found other friends by this time and does not need us!"

"Oh, no! You do him injustice, Mr. Selwyn. Mr. Nasmyth was not like that! I did not leave him my address when I went abroad, so that I could not expect to hear from him; but I quite thought you and Mabel would know of his whereabouts."

"And so we might have done; but to tell you a little secret, the young man had the presumption to propose to my daughter the evening we returned to town, when she very properly dismissed him, and we have seen nothing of him since!"

"But was it presumption on his part, Mr. Selwyn?" demanded Felicia indignantly. "I know more than you think, perhaps, of the business, and can say from personal observation that Mabel gave Mr. Nasmyth very great encouragement while at the Hall, and I think he had every reason to suppose that she cared for him and would marry him."

"My daughter encourage Mr. Nasmyth!" exclaimed Mr. Selwyn. "Oh,

Mab!"

"I am not mistaken, Mr. said Felicia. "I was witness of her protestations of affection for him."

"Oh, that might mean nothing," replied Mr. Selwyn carelessly. "People will indulge in these illusions. But marriage is quite a different matter, and I feel sure Mab never will regard the matter in a serious light."

"More shame for her!" said he warmly. "I have been fond of her, Mr. Selwyn, and disposed to marry her; but after this, I never expect to see her again. A girl who can do that draws a man on to propose to her, and she happens to break his word to her, and then she blames the woman for her sake, and then she blames him on the plea that she was obliged to do so herself."

ton!" he exclaimed; "you can't think how you wound me! Forgive my child for my sake! If she is thoughtless and imprudent, let your example lead her on to better things. Remember Mab is motherless! May I say now what I have long had it in my heart to say to you? We are very old friends, and we are both past the age of romance. Will you help me to guide my poor Mab aright? Will you include us both in your loving care? Will you be my wife and the mother of my girl?"

Had Felicia not been feeling very indignant for Archie's sake, she would have felt inclined to laugh at this proposal, which was so evidently made for the benefit of the proposer, but just then she was too angry to be amused. Her heart was burning in the cause of Archibald Nasmyth, and she replied in a manner very unlike her usual gracious self.

"The mother of Mabel?" she cried. "No, thank you, Mr. Selwyn! Under any circumstances I should have refused your offer, but had I felt disposed to accept it, the care of such a girl as Miss Selwyn would have been quite sufficient to put me off it. I would not be answerable for a young lady who can let a man kiss her and depend upon her affection, and then refuse his offer of marriage! No, thank you! You and I are old friends, as you say, and I hope we may

... Nasmyth amounting
is a very fortunate you
able to displace your
easily!"

"Do you think so?
think so himself! You
know the truth at once,
Mr. Nasmyth was engaged
to me when your daughter
by her false pretensions
This alone would exonerate
receiving her as a friend a
fact of her having rejected
is a thousand times worse
Had she loved him and
him, I would have befriended
Now it is over! With regret
self, it could have never been
not a woman to love twice
told you this in order that you
not imagine that my rejection
offer is entirely on account of
behavior. I thank you for
sure you will absolve me from
of having raised any false
hopes."

sible! I had no idea of what you have told me. It has deeply shocked me that my daughter's folly should have disturbed your peace of mind. But the less said of it the better. I can understand now your anxiety to know what has become of Mr. Nasmyth!"

"Yes!" answered Felicia frankly. "I am of course anxious to hear where he is, and to what extremities your daughter's conduct may have driven him. She has shut my house to him, and deprived him of your influence. He is dependent, as I have told you, on his work for a living. I want to ascertain if he has work. Is he in the employ of Challen & Edwardes, the publishers you introduced him to?"

"Well, to tell you the truth, I never introduced him to them, for this unfortunate fracas between Mab and him occurred the very evening we came to town. But I don't think he is, for I have been in their offices several times lately and never heard his name mentioned."

"How can I find out where he is?" said Felicia, with knitted brows.

"I am sure I don't know, unless you are acquainted with his friends."

"You know he had no friends except ourselves," replied Felicia impatiently.

"To look for an unknown man in London is like looking for the proverbial needle in the stack of hay," re-

I and my daughter should
mixed up in it! I trust, I
trust, it will make no difference
friendship and mine, Miss F
ton, and perhaps when t
softens all disappointments—

"I know what you would sa
rupted Felicia, "and please
it! I am getting too old to
ward to what may happen in t
The present is enough to wre
as a rule. I thank you for you
ship in the past, Mr. Selwyn,
kind intentions in the present.
not forget either, and I sha
be glad to see you at my house.
by!"

She held out her hand, and
himself dismissed, and went h
have a very considerable qua
his daughter on her behavior t
bald Nasmyth and the way in w
had out about it."

to find out what she could about Archibald Nasmyth from them.

She was ushered with much politeness into the inner sanctum, where she came to the point at once by asking for the young man's address.

"Mr. Nasmyth?" repeated the manager, wrinkling his forehead. "I do not remember the name. Has the gentleman had any dealings with us?"

"I am not sure, but I know he had an introduction by letter from Mr. Selwyn, so I thought it probable he might be working for you."

"I don't think so, Miss Hetherington, but I will inquire."

He rang a bell, which produced the same young gentleman who had so summarily dismissed poor Archie when he had called on the firm.

"Mr. Carr, do you know anyone of the name of Nasmyth?"

"The gentleman called on you, sir, about four months ago, but you were too busy to see him."

"Did he leave his address?"

"No, sir. He left his card, but it had no address on it."

"Has he been here since?"

"Several times, sir; but as he had no particular business with us I had orders not to admit him."

"You see, Miss Hetherington," said the manager, turning to her with an apologetic air, "we have so many

personally. Your friend
procured an introduction
then we should have been
make his acquaintance."

"I thought he *had* been
you. Mr. Selwyn promised
If he should come again
ascertain his address and
vately to me? There is my
young man is a stranger in
I am anxious to do something

"Very good, madam.
shall be attended to," replied
ger, as he bowed her out.

In the office she encountered
young clerk again.

"Can you tell me when Mr.
was here last?" she asked him.

"About a fortnight ago,
don't fancy he'll come here
self. You see he'd been here
times and the governor called
him, and he said last time,
him out the message, 'Well,
shan't trouble him again!'"

he's been in trouble, for his clothes seemed worn out."

"And you couldn't find out where he lives for me?"

"I shouldn't know how to set about it, miss. He may have walked miles to our office. Most likely he did. And how is one to find a gentleman who lives in lodgings unless he leaves his address with his friends?"

"No, no, it is true! You are right," said Felicia faintly; "but you will be sure to ask it for me if he comes again. Good-morning!" and she walked back to her carriage.

Poor Archie! Where was he? What was he doing? How was she to find him? These questions worried her night and day. She had forgotten everything, even to mourn over her own disappointment, in her renewed anxiety for him.

She recalled the tales he had told her of his former trials and shuddered to think they might have come over again.

She went to his old lodgings in John Street, but the landlady had neither seen nor heard of him since he had paid off his debt to her. She drove to the hospital and heard from the nurse of Archie's visit there, and what a handsome gentleman he looked in his fashionable suit and a rose in his buttonhole.

"And he has not been here again, nurse?" inquired Felicia.

“Oh, yes, that was true enough. I’ve been traveling in Switzerland and have lost sight of Mr. Nasmyth, and have come home I cannot find his address. Should he come here please get it for me, nurse, and send it to Norfolk Street.”

And she put one of her cards in the nurse’s hands.

“Oh, yes, ma’am, in course I will,” returned the woman; “but the last time he was here, four months since he was here, don’t suppose he’ll trouble to come again.”

Felicia Hetherington went home much in the dark regarding Arthur Nasmyth’s affairs as she had been told she set forth, and quite in despair of tracking him to his den. After several days she even went to the length of inserting an advertisement in the *Telegraph* for him. She worded it carefully, but she thought that he would understand the motive with

his whereabouts—had thought, indeed, by his long silence, that the young man might be dead; but had not taken any means to find out. Hoped the lady might be successful in her search for him, but was afraid that if he were above ground he would have applied to them for work before now.

This last suggestion drove Felicia nearly frantic. Was it really possible that her poor boy had died without anyone being the wiser for it? She blamed herself more than ever for having let him go without exacting a promise that he should keep her *au fait* of his doings; but she had believed at that time that she should have heard more than enough of him through the Selwyns.

She forgot all the injury he had done her in her anxiety to hear of his welfare. He was once more her *protégé*—the lad she had rescued from poverty and death, the boy she wanted to adopt as her son, and she lay awake at night, weeping for the mystery that enveloped his fate and wondering what she could possibly do to unravel it.

At last, in the silence of one of her night vigils, an idea flashed into her mind, making her marvel she had never thought of it before. Why had she not appealed to his mother for news of Archie?

Of course, *she* must know where he was and how he was prospering. But it

with me personally, and I mi
all I wish without her knowing
she told it!"

Then came the next query:

"Why shouldn't I be ne:
What is to prevent my going t
under an assumed name, and
the old lady's acquaintance, an
ing her confidence?"

As the feasibility of this plan
Felicia, she leaped from her b
had almost called up Warrender
middle of the night. But there
more rest for herself. She sat
dawn making her plans and ar
how everything was to be done.

"Warrender!" she exclaimed,
as that faithful creature appeare
her cup of tea the next mornin
do not intend to remain in to
longer. The weather is horribly
and muggy. I feel as if I cou
breathe!"

haven't had half a holiday! I propose to go on to Scotland and spend a few weeks there. I shall start by this evening's express; so put up what I shall require for my stay. It will be colder there than here, remember, so mind we have plenty of wraps. The pure Scottish air will do me a great deal more good than this stuffy old London!"

"That it will, ma'am, and you will pardon me for saying that I couldn't see what you were stopping in town for during this dull weather, and when you dislike it so much. Scotland will be ever so much better for you."

"Do you think so, Warrender?" replied Felicia, with a sigh. "Let us hope your prophecy may come true!"

CHAPTER XII.

THE SALVATION.

THOSE who know the old French-looking town of Kelso, in Scotland, will understand that Rose Cottage may well have deserved its name in summer. Then its walls of gray stone were hidden by masses of climbing rose bushes, which covered them like a garment, and made the air fragrant with their sweetness. But now it was close on December, and the little house looked cold and

The poor invalid, Mrs. Nasr had been paralyzed in her love for twenty years past, felt the keenly, as she sat all day in a position, by the rather meager fire shivered from inertia.

Her cousin, Miss Bruce, was not much younger than herself in her power to console her; the old lady was very depressed, tears kept rolling down her cheeks.

She had cause to be uneasy and despondent. Her son Archibald had never failed, hitherto, to send her a few pounds monthly to eke out the small pittance she received as a pension for her late husband's services to the government, but he had not remitted money for several weeks past, and gave no explanation of the omission. On the contrary, he wrote as if he were prosperous and happy; but there was a gloomy tone about his letters that seemed to betoken some mystery behind, and his mother was

time, and beyond the reach of want or work forever!"

"Foolish, do you call it, Elizabeth?" echoed Margaret Bruce. "I should say it was downright wicked! To engage himself to marry a lady like that,—with such a fortune, too,—and then to go philandering with a girl to her very face! No wonder she dismissed him! She heard of it, no doubt. Archie has no one but himself to blame for his disappointment."

"But he writes in such good spirits lately! That is what puzzles me, Margaret. He talks of going here and going there, as if he had any amount of money to spend. But where does he get it from? He must have work. And yet he hasn't sent me a shilling since September! I can't make it out. It's not like Archie; and to think that I should be living on you, my dear, and you so poor already! It breaks my heart!"

And Mrs. Nasmyth began to cry quietly behind her hand.

"Now, my dear Elizabeth, this is nonsense!" exclaimed Miss Bruce. "Are we not cousins, almost sisters, and have a right to go shares with each other in everything? Archie will send us some money by and by—perhaps a good round sum to make up for lost time! Didn't he write a word about it in his last letter?"

and enjoying himself so much
can't make it out. It seems
Archie to forget his poor mother!

"He has not forgotten, you
depend upon that; but there is
somebody else! Perhaps he is
over his broken engagement now
he likes to let us know, and in
everything else out of his head
lad, he has made a mess of it
mistake!"

"Just at this season, too, it is
inconvenient!" sighed Mrs. N
as she shivered visibly.

"There, it's no use thinking of
longer, Elizabeth," said Miss B
she essayed to put some more
the fire, but her cousin stopped

"No, no, Margaret, you must
that. I am quite warm enough,
are using a frightful quantity of
it is. But I wish my boy would
openly to me!"

cient interest in our affairs to do that for you, when she returns to town! She seems a very benevolent person and interested in several societies for reclaiming waifs and city arabs and those kinds of people!"

"Margaret!" exclaimed Mrs. Nasmyth, in a voice of horror, "do you mean to compare my Archie to a city arab?"

"No, my dear, certainly not; but he is a young man alone in London, and wants looking after perhaps just as much. I feel afraid, sometimes, lest his grief at this rupture with Miss Hetherington may have made Archie a little reckless."

"Oh, I trust not," replied her cousin, "for that would put a barrier between them forever. Do you really think that I might speak to Miss Mannering with safety, Margaret, that she would sympathize with my anxiety, and keep my confidence?"

"Oh, I am sure of that! Miss Mannering is not like everybody else. She is just the sort of person to influence a young man for good. She would feel for your distress and natural anxiety, and would help you if it lay in her power."

"I wonder what makes her stay in Kelso at such an inclement season of the year," said Mrs. Nasmyth musingly. "There is nothing to be seen here during the winter!"

... she comes to see I
beth, tell her all your trouble
what she says. Perhaps
gest doing something he
good-natured. She bea
face."

"Yes, it is a sweet I
Mrs. Nasmyth, "and sl
woman, I am sure of that!
your advice, Margaret, a
heart to her. I have oft
why she should have cared
acquaintance. Perhaps it
who sent her our way!"

Of course, Miss Man
Felicia Hetherington. She
herself and Warrender at th
that Kelso boasted of, an
made the acquaintance o
Bruce, by lingering about R
till she saw her come out to
then entering into convers
the town and its environs.
dents of Kelso were ru
Bruce had needed no bett

But as yet the name of Archie had been introduced very cursorily, and without giving Felicia any excuse for asking where he lived. But on that afternoon she was to gain the information she was there for.

She looked in about five o'clock, and found Mrs. Nasmyth still in a state of depression, and naturally inquired the cause.

"Ah, that's right, Miss Mannering," exclaimed Miss Bruce. "Make her tell you all about her trouble. I know it'll do her good! Now I shall just leave you alone till it's time for tea, and that will give Elizabeth an opportunity to open her heart to you!"

She left the room as she spoke, and Felicia turned to the invalid.

"I trust you have no serious trouble, Mrs. Nasmyth," she said gently; "but if I can be of use to you, pray tell me everything!"

"What right have I to trouble you with my worries, Miss Mannering, and when I have known you for so short a time?" replied Archie's mother. "And it will seem a trifling thing, too, to a lady like yourself, who cannot know the anxieties of a parent!"

"It is about your son, then, that you want to speak to me?" said Felicia quickly.

"Yes, that is what is troubling me at the present moment. You see, Miss

— "I have written to you, said Felicia.

"Oh, yes; and very long letters. Indeed, he has been in such a state of mind lately that it has been his only consolation to pour out his heart to me on paper. He has cut his own throat, poor lad, by his carelessness and perversity, and destroyed his prospects in life!"

"Indeed! How was that?"

"I should like to read you his letters," said Mrs. Nasmyth. "I can tell his story better than I can if I do you will, I hope, regard me in the strictest confidence. I would never forgive me if he had let a stranger's eyes see them!"

"You may rely on me," said

Mrs. Nasmyth drew from her pocket hanging on her arm several of Archie's handwriting and smoothed the pages out before her.

"I must tell you first, Miss

born, and one of the dearest and best creatures that God ever created!"

"Did he—your son—tell you so?" interposed her listener.

"You shall read for yourself in a minute," replied Mrs. Nasmyth. "Well, Archie was engaged to her, and I was so happy. They were to have been married last September, and I thought my Archie's fortune was made. He is a very handsome lad, Miss Mannering, though I dare say you will smile and think that is a mother's partiality, but everyone says the same of him; and he is clever too, though he has never had anyone to push him on in the profession to which he belongs. I did not think it was at all wonderful that this lady (whose name I think I had better not tell you, for I wouldn't annoy her for all the world) should love him—and he loved her, my poor Archie. I can assure you he did. But when everything was happily settled between them he went down with other friends to her place in the country, and there a designing girl got hold of him. I can't think how it happened, but the lady he was engaged to was laid up, and Archie and this girl were thrown a great deal together; and she led him on, I suppose, till the poor lad did not know what he was about. Anyway, they flirted a great deal too much, and it must have come to the ears of the other

“Ah, I don't know! She
been flirting with him, and
would not have anything fu
to him. Anyway, he woul
miserable if she had, for he c
her now!”

“But he could not have
woman he was engaged to, c
not have carried on with thi
Felicia, in a trembling voice

“Ah, my dear lady, that
know very little of the natur
as how should you? But
alike! They cannot resist t
I believe this girl was pret
poor Archie was drawn aw
kisses and her wiles to tal
nonsense which he would
ashamed of in a cooler mor
letters will show you that! I
written about a couple of mo

tage. Not *that* indeed, for the mess of pottage was at least savory, I presume, while it lasted, while this confounded little jilt already makes me shudder when I think of her! I cannot say I am sorry that she played me such a scurvy trick, for I should have hated her in a fortnight if I had had the misfortune to marry her. But to lose Felicia, who was so good to me—so patient with me—so generous—so loving—Oh, mother! I would die thankfully to hear her just say that she does not think me utterly ungrateful for her many kindnesses. I wonder if she hates me, if she utterly despises me, but I dare not think of her. It drives me mad!”

“And then just listen to this, Miss Mannering,” said Mrs. Nasmyth, taking up another letter:

“I cannot work, nor read, nor do anything! I am always dreaming of her. Not of the houses and lands I have forfeited in losing her,—do me the credit to believe that, mother,—but just of her kind, honest, loving face, and how badly I requited her goodness to me. If I could win her back, could convince her beyond all doubt that I really love her, I would gladly turn into a carpenter, or gardener, or groom, or anything that would support her, and take her without a halfpenny, but only

only wish I had the courage to
like Judas and hang myself!"

"You may fancy how unhappy letters have made me, Miss Manner continued Mrs. Nasmyth. "I have been here and dreaded what the next post would bring. I have thought sometimes that he would commit suicide."

"But surely he must have got that feeling now. It came of his disappointment," said Felicia, downcast eyes.

"I am not sure of that! Sometimes I think he is worse than he was! The last few letters have been written in such a reckless strain that I don't understand them. If I inquire how he is going on and what success he has had in his profession, he answers that he is 'as good as a sandboy,' and that I am not to

"Do you fear he is ill again?" inquired her visitor.

"I do not know," replied the old lady; "but Archie was always reticent about his own affairs, and if he had not felt this business deeply he would not have confided so much of his feelings to me! But I think his poor heart has been just bursting with its pain, and he felt he must tell someone. I must tell you, Miss Mannering, that Archie has always been used to send me a little help, for I have no shame in saying that I am very poor, but for the last two months he has sent me nothing, which, combined with his accounts of his own gayety, puzzles me completely!"

"But what can I do for you, dear Mrs. Nasmyth?" demanded Felicia, who was trembling all over.

"Well, my dear lady, Margaret tells me you come from London, and doubtless know many people there, and oh! if I thought you could let this lady know in any way how my poor son is fretting his soul out about her, she——"

"I couldn't do that, Mrs. Nasmyth," said Felicia quickly. "I—I—do not know the lady in question, and if I did, it is too delicate a matter for anyone to interfere in."

"Perhaps so," replied the other, with a disappointed air; "still I could give you her name and address, and I think

osity, she might consent to see him again and hear his story from his own lips. And if that came to pass, I feel sure she would give him and take him back, for she loved him and he loved her,—I have no doubt about that,—before this miserable affair happened to separate them.’

“But you say the lady dismissed him. How can you be sure it was on account of his flirtation with the other one?”

“What else should she give him for?” demanded Archie’s mother, with open eyes. “Why, they were to have been married in September, and only a few weeks before she risked her life to save his when he was being run over by a pair of horses. Oh! I don’t know—no one can understand who was not acquainted with her, how sweet, dear a creature she is, and how she put herself out for him.”

"And yet he left her!" ejaculated Felicia.

"No, indeed, he did not! His fancy was ensnared for a while, but his heart has always been hers and is to this day! He has ruined his own life, poor lad, but he has not quite lost his honor!"

"Will you tell me where your son lives, Mrs. Nasmyth?" said Felicia; "although I do not see my way to be a go-between for him and the lady he was engaged to, I can at least set your mind more at rest about him by ascertaining, without his knowledge, if he is really prosperous and happy."

"Oh, thank you, my dear lady, thank you! I shall be grateful for the smallest information on the subject. His last letter, written a month ago, came from 18 Rambouillet Terrace, Lisson Grove, and I think if he had moved he would have let me know."

"Lisson Grove!" said Felicia. "Where on earth is Lisson Grove?"

"Somewhere in the country, I should imagine, from the sound of it," replied Mrs. Nasmyth; "but if you can find it, my dear Miss Mannering, and let me hear the truth about my boy, I shall be everlastingly grateful to you!"

"I will do my best, Mrs. Nasmyth, you may be assured of that, and let you know the result as soon as possible. My maid and I travel South to-morrow."

"So soon!" cried the old lady. "Oh!

As she heard Archie she became feverishly anxious to ascertain how much truth there was in the reports Mrs. Nasmyth had received from her. Could it be actually true that he had loved her, had loved her all his life? Was it the natural regret of a man who finds he has lost both his love and his fortune at one blow?

At the mere supposition that he had cared for her Felicia's pulses began to throb, her head spun! How could he have loved her poor, forsaken, disappointed, maimed at the onset of life and without friends or money, how could he have forgiven the little wound given her vanity, if he really had? What mistake he had made and regretted!

But there was another side to the question. She did not forget her own happiness. What was it Archie told his friends about his going out into society and enjoying himself so much?

Yet her heart beat like a girl's as she thought of a possible meeting between them, and the first morning she waked up in her house in Norfolk Street Felicia sallied forth by herself with the determination to find Lisson Grove. An inquiry from a policeman elicited the information that Lisson Grove was situated somewhere at the back of Upper Baker Street, so she hailed a cab and told the driver to put her down in Blandford Square.

She wanted to approach the place cautiously and make due inquiries before Archie should be aware of her proximity. Rambouillet Terrace sounded very imposing, but when Felicia reached it she found a row of filthy-looking, beggarly little tenements, a thousand times worse than those in John Street had been. If Archie lived there he must have sunk low indeed.

When she reached No. 18 she shrank from entering it. On the doorstep stood two dirty women, with their tangled hair hanging down their backs, wretched puling infants in their arms, and words upon their lips that made Felicia shudder to listen to.

Although she was most plainly dressed, they gave a loud laugh as she drew near, as if the mere fact of her being a gentlewoman was sufficient to make her a subject of ridicule; but she saw that the house bore the right num-

... James—now so re
she commenced:

"I beg your pardon for i
you, but can you tell me if
the name of Nasmyth lodges

"Nasmyth!" repeated one
turning to the other, "is that
of the cove in the hattie, Bet?

"I dunno," replied her co
"I never troubles arter thei
You mean the young feller
goes out? It may be. What

"The young feller as never g
Felicia remembered Archie's l
his mother, and thought it wa
sible that they could mean him

"If the young gentleman's
Nasmyth," she said timidly, "
friend of his, and should like
something about him. I under
was very gay and always g
somewhere or other!"

"A friend o' his'—"

gentleman's mother, but I don't wish to see him just yet!"

"All right, missus! I don't think he's likely to come down and trouble you. I believe he's keeping his bed. I've seen nuffin of him for a fortnight."

"But has he had no meals, then?" demanded Felicia, in accents of alarm.

"Oh! we knows nuffin about his meals, missus! The gents as stay here all boards theirselves. He may 'ave six a day for aught I knows. But he don't look like it!"

"Is he ill?" cried Felicia quickly.

"I don't know as he's ill, but he's werry down in his luck, if it's the hattic you're speaking of. My master had to take a razor out of his hand only last Thursday, or he'd 'ave done for hisself in a jiffy!"

"What!" exclaimed Felicia. "Do you mean to say he was going to destroy himself?"

"That's it, missus; and he'll do it one of these days, or my name's not Elizabeth Turner."

"Oh! let me go to him at once!" cried Felicia, as she attempted to pass through the doorway. "I will pay you everything—double what he owes you—if you'll only let me through at once before he does himself an injury. How do you know that he may not have become desperate before now?"

"Well, it's none of our business,

owes us,—five shillin' a weel
weeks and an 'arf, with anyti
chooses for the trouble we've
to,—you can go up as soon as y

Felicia took out her purse an
putting three pounds in the as
woman's hand, ran as quickl
could up the narrow ricketty
the top of the house.

At any other moment she wo
been disgusted by the sickenin
that saluted her nostrils, and t
of filth and poverty that met
every side. But she could thin
one thing—Archie might even
laid out stark and stiff upon th
hurried into eternity by his o
hand.

She reached the attic and l
loudly at the door. There was
sponse. She knocked again an
calling to him at the same time a

But the door was fastened, whether on the inside or outside she could not determine. All she knew was that admission seemed impossible. She flew downstairs again and accosted the woman breathlessly.

"I cannot get any reply! I am frightened to death, and I must see what is the matter! Will you get someone to break in the door for me? I will pay you well for your trouble!"

She had already seen that money would procure her anything with these people.

"Oh, to be sure!" replied the woman, "my master's below and would be proud to oblige you. Here, Bill," she continued, bawling down the kitchen stairs, "here's a lady as is known to the hattie and she'll come down 'andsome if you'll stave in his door for her. He won't answer and she thinks as there's summat wrong with 'im!"

This appeal produced a greasy-looking man in shirt sleeves, smoking a short clay pipe.

"I shouldn't wonder, for one," he replied, "for he's kept hisself werry close for weeks past, and I don't believe he's had so much as a bit o' bread atween his lips during all that time!"

"Oh, never mind talking!" cried Felicia, in an agony. "Be quick, for God's sake, or we may be too late!"

perhaps because they have
live for; but for her, it
Archie!

When the lout with the
mouth reached the attic he
work of the door by plac
against it and staving it in.

"Just as I thought! He
said, as he burst it open.

Felicia rushed through
There lay Archibald Nasm
bare boards, pinched and l
appearance dead, though the
lingered about his white
clenched teeth.

"Run for a doctor! Ge
you can! This for your tro
Felicia, in a low, determined
she put a sovereign into
palm.

"All right, mum," he answ
turned on his heel and went
to tell his

How beautiful he looked in death! Much as he had done when that fatal accident, which had brought her so much trouble, had occurred to him. She bent down more than once and kissed his marble forehead, and whispered loving words, which she knew he could not hear, into his deaf ears.

It was not more than twenty minutes, perhaps, before footsteps sounded on the stairs again, but it had seemed ages to her, when the dirty man returned with a kindly looking, but rather rough, individual, one of those doctors of the poor, who have suited themselves to the company they are forced to keep.

He nodded slightly to Felicia, and, stooping down, placed his hand over Archibald Nasmyth's heart.

"He's not dead," he said curtly, "but very near it. Are you a relative of this young man's?" he continued, to Felicia.

"No; but I am here on behalf of his mother," she replied.

"Well, there's nothing the matter with him except starvation. This attack is due to inanition. The stomach is perfectly empty, which, acting with the extreme cold——"

"Yes, yes; but what must we do?" cried Felicia, in an agony.

"Put him to bed and feed him till he has recovered. Here, my man," said the doctor to the landlord, "just help

They dragged poor body on to the wretched
been accustomed to occ
few minutes the articl
practitioner had sent fo
hands. With Felicia's
beat up the eggs and mi
the milk and brandy, and
a teaspoonful down the
man's throat. The liquid
stream down his chin.

"Are you sure he is a
Felicia, in an awed voice.

"Quite sure, madam; b
some time before he is able
He must have been days w
What were his friends abou
get into such a condition?"

"We did not know. H
us," she said falteringly
been unfortunate in his pr
he was too proud to tell
failed

"It is not too late, my dear madam; that is, if you will undertake the case, or send in a nurse to do so. All he requires is unremitting attention. He must be fed by teaspoonfuls, and as often as he can take it! If this is done he will be a different creature in twelve hours. Can you remain here? It is not exactly the place for a lady——"

"I shall remain here," replied Felicia quickly, as she removed her mantle and bonnet. "But you will come again?"

"Certainly. I will look in again this afternoon. Meanwhile, can I do anything for you?"

"Yes! Please send this telegram to my address, for my maid to join me here," said Felicia, handing him a penciled message. "Then she will be able to get anything Mr. Nasmyth may require. How soon do you think he may be moved, doctor?"

"This evening, if he takes nourishment. Give him another spoonful, madam. That's it! Bravo! See, he is coming to himself! He has moved his hand. You must not be surprised if he rambles a little at first. People generally do under similar circumstances."

Here, to Felicia's intense relief, the exhausted man gave a slight shiver and a slight moan, then, glancing round in a frightened manner, he made a violent effort to raise himself. But the doctor's



...are you?"

At these words Felicia slipped
the bedstead.

"You are in your own room,"
said the doctor, "and I am your
nurse and attendant. You have just
had a fainting fit, so you will
lie quiet for a little while, as
you are told. There is nothing
to be alarmed about. You will be
soon."

"You're a meddling fool!"
Archie ungraciously. "Why do
you have left me alone? You
only brought me back to more
trouble when I hoped it was all over!"

"You won't say that an hour later,"
cried the doctor cheerfully.
"Be glad enough then, I bet, that
I was so near at hand for you!"

"That's all you know about it,"
Archie, as he turned his weary
face round to the door.

"He'll do now," he said, turning on his heel, "keep up the nourishment and I'll look in again about three o'clock. Good-morning, madam," and he left the room.

"Good - morning, madam!" The words attracted Archie's attention. Whom could they have been spoken to? He turned his head curiously and saw Felicia.

As his eyes met hers he uttered a low cry of shame and buried his face in the pillow. She threw herself on her knees by his side.

"Archie, Archie, my dear friend! don't look as if you were not pleased to have me here! Did we not agree even while parting to remain friends? Who, then, has a better right to look after your interests? I come from your mother, Archie, your poor mother, who cannot come to you herself, and in her name I beg of you not to be offended at my interference, but to let me act for you in her stead?"

"Offended!" he murmured, with a sound that was very like a sob. "No, but I am ashamed—too deeply ashamed to look you in the face! Oh, my good, kind, patient friend, how have I requited your affection? And yet you forget the insult I have offered you, the injury I have done you, and for the second time you seek me out in my wretchedness and succor me. Why is it?"



nothing left for me to live for!
tried to take my life more than
but was too great a coward to do
am a failure and a disgrace to
body! What is the use of me
I shall only starve over again
not even equal to earning my
lihood."

"Yes, yes, you will be!" said
soothingly. "Help will come
Archie! Only have faith in
friends! You should have let
of your condition!"

"Let *who* know?" he inquired
mother, who has nothing to
herself—or you, who loaded
benefits only to have your
thrown in your face again?"

"I have never looked on it
light," she said.

"Because you are too merciful
exclaimed. "O Felicia, you

obey orders. Take another spoonful of this, there's a dear boy, and don't worry about the future! I have sent for Warrender, and as soon as you are able to be moved we are going to take you to Norfolk Street, to be nursed back to health again."

She raised his weary young head on her kind arm as she spoke, and held the spoon to his lips, and something in her look, or her touch, emboldened Archibald Nasmyth to raise his pallid mouth to hers.

Then the misery was over! Their arms clung round each other in a warm embrace, and Felicia whispered:

"Be happy, my beloved, be happy! It is all forgotten and forgiven! Let us wipe out the past from to-day!"

And so once more they tasted the unutterable bliss of mutual love.

That night, when Archie was asleep, Felicia wrote to his mother:

"Be easy, my dear friend! Your boy is found and all is right with him. He begs me to send you the inclosed note for twenty pounds and to say that his engagement with Miss Hetherington is renewed, and their marriage will take place in a week's time. You will think this comes from your friend Mannering! Well, so it does, only she has changed her name to Felicia Hetherington, and assures you that in giving her your boy's



address, you secured to her the renewal of her life's happiness!"

Nothing intervened to prevent the wedding this time, and Mr. and Mrs. Archibald Nasmyth are as happy as most married couples—indeed, some people think more so.

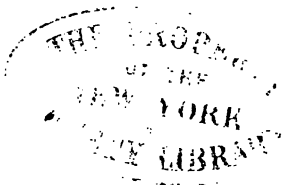
Fanny Cuthbert, who is naturally the most constant visitor to Cheshunt Hall, said, in speaking of them to a mutual friend the other day:

"I always think of them as an ideal man and wife, they are so perfectly in accord. Even the presence of Mrs. Nasmyth and Miss Bruce at the Hall only seems to increase their happiness. Archibald Nasmyth is not a genius in the eyes of anyone except his wife,—there is no doubt of that,—still his poems and tales are very pretty, and bring him in a modest income. And as for their little girl, why, she is a perfect darling! Her parents adore her, of course. Felicia, because she resembles her father, and Archie, because she resembles himself! But that is just the difference between a man's love and a woman's."

"Do you consider Mr. Nasmyth selfish, then?" demanded her friend.

"I consider nothing! I only see that they are happy, each one in his or her own way, and I am very thankful for it! But then, who could fail to be happy with such a woman as Felicia? Rightly

was she named 'Happy.' She ought to be so, since she makes the happiness of everyone with whom she comes in contact. Dear, unselfish Felicia! Her face may not be beautiful, but she truly has a beautiful soul!"



THE END.

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